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QUIET WATERS.

Quiet Waters:

ESSAYS

ON SOME

STREAMS OF SCOTLAND.

By H. W. H.

Author of "A Mediæval Scribe," and other Poems.

J. AND R. PARLANE,

PAISLEY.

1884.



PREFACE.

A SUMMER basket is offered, filled by the riversides—filled only with wild common things which may be gathered by who will. Those who are intimate with the little streams which wander from sea to sea may themselves pluck this homeliest fruit—the fruit from their sycamore trees. If this homely fruit be here hidden in the leafage of homelier thoughts—thoughts that are only sweet and cool to the wanderer who gathered them alone—yet, such as they are, they are offered to those who love the watersides, who also have wandered and dreamed there in the first tumult of youth, and may keep them for love, as spoils of their own, from luminous, far-off days.

We are only “gatherers of sycamore fruit,” gleaners in the fields of early corn, Ruths going after the reapers, having no sickles of our own to reap any harvest of the past, but pleased to bind in the

twilight some golden barley sheaves, and bear them home at eventide to those who do not go out into the fields.

To a book published forty years ago, the "Chronicles of St. Mungo"; to Mr M'George's "Old Glasgow," to a few oral traditions—are mostly owed the material of the essay on the River Kelvin. But perhaps it is unnecessary to name authorities in pages which profess so little—which offer only a few simple pleasures free for who will to share—a basket of sycamore fruit, a gleaner's sheaf of corn.

H. W. H.

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QUIET WATERS.

THE CLYDE AT BOTHWELL.

“Blantyre hymned her holiest lays,
And Bothwell’s walls flung back the praise.”

—*Sir Walter Scott.*



THE slow river, unheard, winds somewhere through the shadows to the sea. The beautiful ruin of the priory, more than half hidden in its elms, seems to consecrate the silence. One looks through the dark of its greenness for the vision of Sir Bors,—“the little whitest dove with the golden censor in its mouth.”

Here, on a spring noontide, when every flower is a-blow, you adventure on that strange feeling which all who know themselves have known. A flood of association comes upon you, then recedes like a wave, but does not come back again like a wave on the seashore. Some delicate apposition of

ideas is momentarily insinuated by the leaves; some hint of remote memory is offered in the ripple of the river. You are touched for an instant by an association which you cannot recover in its vividness. It took possession of you in an unawared sweet vacancy of soul, but you cannot take possession of it. The beauty which suggested disturbs by the baffled desire to enjoy.

The castle confronts the convent in its supreme ruined grace—an ideal—the perfect of its kind. The open courtyard is green with the greenest of green grass. Here and there through the small arched windows, where the centuries' ivy will suffer it, are vistas of the silentest beauty—green leaves, and nothing more. Through a loophole in the wall towards the priory you look down and see always green leaves, the river threading its way among their shadows—weirdly like a living soul. It sweeps round in the shadows, and suggests, as it loses itself in the deep beauty, a vista of yet fairer loveliness beyond. It conceals a thousand charms and repeats a thousand more, in the subtle manner of a river with a castle and a convent to keep in a green obscurity. This beauty is enhanced by the charm which eludes your sense, by some supernatural night-scene which constantly fills your vision.

“So weird and wild the broken chords
Struck where the river has no fords,
Where all the souls of all the years
In these sad nocturns greet their peers.”

The valley of the river vibrates with the hushed life of its cloister, castle and hamlet. Every foot of the green soft parish is humanized by centuries. Ballads of love and war and death have rung over "the wan water" since the earliest harper sung.

"The wan water,
For a' men ca' it Clyde."

were of those lines of common minstrelsy which any singer used and none claimed. So long and mournfully ballad music rang along the waterside. No Scottish stream but the Yarrow was so beloved of song. The song fills the shadows still, and haunts the beauty of the river, and sighs with the wild wind through the castle and the convent's ruined walls.

This castle and priory at first sight you love bewilderingly. You have no amulet against the witchcraft of the water. For the water flows between, and reflects both, in the sweetest, tenderest confusion of reflections of leafage and arch and tower. With what reciprocal loveliness they look across the shady river to each other, the lovely little window of the priory embowered in the elm-tree's shadow, the turrets of the Norman Castle half hid in the ivy wreaths.

The castle stands high with the river for its fosse, and the steep bank of greensward to strengthen its strong walls. The priory nestles low—red against the red rock, and so concealed in the intertwisting of elm and hazel and ash that the native and the

quarried stone are scarcely distinguishable from one another. And the sweet river flows between, dark in their meeting shadows, and nurturing flowers for both.

The Augustinian monk came here from Jedburgh Abbey in the reign of Alexander Second. The monks had their gardens on Mount Carmel—gardens, a wonder of beauty under chestnut and cedar and oak; gardens perfumed with myrtle, and golden with tree-bloom. But here also, in this Northern Clydesdale, under the gray windy skies, they tempted a strange bloom and fragrance to the edge of the quiet river. They have left traces of their horticultural love and skill in the modern Clydesdale flora, which reminds you of this and that wilding at Bothwell, that it is "an outcast from gardens."

With a bed of anemones swaying before you to the softest wind, and the purple of violets gleaming through a palor of primroses, with Longing and Quietness met in your heart, like guests from a far country, each unknown to the other,—you interpret the thought of St. Bernard, the old dreamer. You care not what he himself meant, as you stand among the Bothwell bloom, between the castle and the priory, the river flowing at your feet, and only find in his words that plea of every lovely thing for the turning from matter to spirit, from life to the Giver of life. It is so easy, while you linger here by this dreamfulest of rivers, to wrap in the old mystic's thought the tenderness of your own. All the sacredest

things of life are things for which you give no reason ; as most of people instinctively know, and live the sweeter lives for knowing. On the burst of a psalm or a hymn lovely or rude, the heart rises heavenward in that moment when reason is of no account, but the soul has sight.

The grace of the flowers and the leaves are the garment of a mystery. Why the supreme of loveliness is always sad till it reaches through sadness to faith, no one will ever explain. It is the heart's secret, a secret which seems to lie so near the outmost confine of philosophy, so close on that border land which only love can reach, that the silent shadows in water, and the luminous greenness of leaves are but quiet garments for it, which hide the spirit they invest. And here, from these Bothwell woods where the tenderest of wildings blow, we greet in his convent garden the old mystic who read faith in flowers.

The vagrant from monastic gardens is still found in the Dusky Crane's Bill that haunts the thickets by the river ; in the Bloody Veined Dock in the woods ; in the Yellow Figwort and Ivy-Leaved Toadflax that flourish on the castle walls. The "ane fruitful orchard of the priorie" had long a beneficent descent in the famous apple-orchards which stretched from Bothwell Castle to where the Mouse Water meets the Clyde. The lovely wealth of such fruit trees allured many to their midst. The Norman Lady Mahilia came to the orchards of Kent and fixed her pleasant home among them, and won the fragrant

name of D'Appleton. The May and September of apple-orchards could never have their meed of praise—as Norman lady and Augustinian monk were probably well agreed. Whether the Christmas mistletoe of the Kentish apple trees could be tempted northward to the convent orchards of the Clyde is not told in the records of the old lingering fruit trees. It seems that the beautiful parasite loves not the northern woodlands; nor was it ever adopted in mediæval church use. It had round its gray greenness the traditions of the Druids, the forest priests. It hung its pretty disordered branches, and transparent berries and chaste gray green slender lancet leaves in the winter time of woods, and counterfeited summer among the blackened boughs. But the church disowned its heathen grace, content with the supreme loveliness of the orchard fruit and flower. In the legend's Fairy Isle of Apples the good King Arthur sleeps. All monastic use and tradition appropriated apple-orchards, and endued the mossy walks with their own dreams and calm. The trees in the cottage gardens which still hang along the river-side had their parentage here when Archibald of Galloway wooed the Lady Joan of Bothwell; the ancestral blossoms fell round the feet of the Monks of Blantyre, who read their peaceful missals in these shadows before Robert of Gloucester rhymed.

Among the orchards and the flowers and the shady forest trees, castle and convent stood with only the river between. The castle in the fourteenth century

was the seat of Joan Murray, a lady of royal descent, who held Bothwell in her own right. She ruled her own vassals of Bothwellhaugh before the Lord of Galloway's day. This lord comes athwart the shadows, and thereafter Joan's personality is lost. Her life moves shadily on, one imagines, to the sound of her own Clyde. Her husband, the lord of Galloway, becomes the first Earl of Douglas, and his hunting-horn is wound among the woods of Bothwellhaugh. The name of the Lady of Clydesdale drops serenely out of history. Joan walks only among her royal oaks with the shadows of the fawns about her feet, the gleam of the morning on her soft garments, and the music of her children's laughter coming over the cowslip beds. Many a garden has its sepulchre, and its Mary weeping uncomforted in the early dawning of the day. But Joan had her sunshine before the shadows fell; and how could she tell the glory and the grief that should touch the poor child Marjory who played among the flowers? The Monks came across from the elm tree's shadow and moored their boat among the hazels; and between the castle and the priory the silent river flowed in calm.

There were raids on the Borders for Douglas's arm to quell, and feuds of Buchans and Ogilvies, and Crawfords and Lindsays in the manner of Scottish story. But the woods of Bothwell lay in unwonted peace. They were filled already with the traces of unwelcome guests. Edward First and Edward Third had issued their writs here; for the castle was a

goodly one—strong and fair both. And the English Earls of Pembroke and Hereford, each for a brief space, once looked as liege lords from the castle which now had won back its own. There was truce in those days beside the river which the very flowers must feel.

And the hall where the grass now grows was strewn with its sweet-scented herbs—the lavender and rosemary and thyme—from the waterside. And Joan's maidens wrought their fair tapestries in the high turret-rooms, and saw through the loop-holes the gentle river wandering down among its own sweet flowers. And the music of the convent psalms would blend with the songs of the maidens.

Was that tranquil priory, so close to the river-side, with the sweet broken reflections of its serene arched windows blent with reeds and lilies and reversions of round Norman towers, no protest to the war-worn knight who held his iron glove on the North, and forayed Cumberland?

Prime-sang, noon-sang, even-sang came over the shady water, and rang through the baron's castle with their bursts of pleading or of praise. It was many centuries since "John the singer of the Apostolic See came into Britain to teach." But the music which he brought from Rome had never died out of the land. The church was a mother too gentle and wise to neglect to comfort her children's hearts with a mother's hymns and lullabies.

The Earl with the Countess Joan heard the music

day by day, in his castle alive with councils of war, and stately disguised ambitions. He could not stay his hand from battle, but for rude unrighteous deed there might be atonement offered.

In the village stood the little church where his vassals worshipped God. Was the little church already crumbled by age or shattered by the English soldiers? The record of the gift was not told. But Douglas rebuilt it in the beautiful manner of his time. The church which now stands amidst the long grass of its immemorial graves is itself modern enough, yet the old abuts on it still—the grace of a time worn legend ingathered to a new poem. Against the eastern wall of the new building leans the last fragment of the old;—a tier of windows on either side, a great eastern window with the Douglas arms cut above—the same quartered with the royal arms repeated within and without. The high, pointed roof (flecked now by the soft faded colours with which nature comforts decay) is covered with great flags which once were polished stone.

Near the base of the spire might sometime have been read in Saxon letters the name of the Master Mason, “Magister Thomas Tron.” A name perfectly unfamous, and without a date. For if the church was beautiful, as Earl Archibald’s gift must be, yet indeed there were here no wonders of marble and mosaic to make a man love himself the better, and ask homage of posterity. The architect was not tempted to the tender egotism of Nicolas Alunno,

who inscribed on an altar-piece the quaint, loving, self-dispraiseful appeal, "To the reader, By her will the pious Brisida formerly commanded this noble work. . . . If you ask the name of the painter, it is Nicolas, the Alumnus of Fuligno. But, reader, who had the most merit—I make you the judge of it—Brisida, who commanded it, or the hand which executed it?" It might be there was no Brisida for this Magister Thomas Tron, no pious wife to command noble work—only the Earl Archibald on return from some border foray commanding the rebuilding of the little church as an act of easy contrition. For this ancient choir still lingering so long past its date, was itself a renovation of some yet earlier pile. The church seems to have grown with the green grass. It has no sure beginning in history, it lies in the shadows of the time when the first Culdees set their feet on the waiting moors and mosses.

But it rose into sudden distinction, rebuilt by this new Earl. He endowed it with the lands of Orbiston in Joan's barony of Bothwell, and with the lands of Netherurd in his own Sherifdom of Peebles. He also granted it all the tithes of Bothwell, of Bertram-Shotts, of Avondale and Stonehouse. In 1398 it rose complete above the soft green haughs, and was erected into a Collegiate Church for a provost and eight prebends. And thereafter the ceaseless music of the singers stole over the quiet meadows, the prime-sang and the even-sang rose as the serfs passed to and from their toil. And the church doors stood

always open like an earnest of the welcome to the Father's House above—a place where the poor and the weary and the aged might rest and shelter and pray. As the faith which we hold becomes less and less a creed, and more and more the one dear motive of the heart (wanting neither proof nor disproof any more than the circling affections which hallow our daily life), we can well bear to see bit by bit of the ages' incrustations fall from it, yet more tenderly reverence the church which stood open in the dark years.

This church in the village Earl Archibald built when his own life was nearing its close. At its altar Marjory his daughter was married to the Prince of Scotland—married in haste to the handsome, careless prince, while the sound of gathering battle was heard almost at the castle gates. This is the historical event of the old village church, that ill-omened marriage when the choir was new and fair.

No second bridegroom prince ever knelt there, but perhaps the tragic story of this one royal marriage was the forgotten source of many wierd ballads that echoed long through the haughs. Bothwell Church, according to tradition, was the scene of a fearful lyke-wake, where at "mirk-midnight" the dead lady revealed the story of her violent end. The ballad with its mournful refrain, "O Bothwell Banks, bloom bonny," is referred to in the Scottish Minstrelsy, but never seems to have been printed.

The marriage of the Prince and Marjory was

tragical enough without any aid of fancy. In the time of utmost need, while Marjory was yet a bride, openly unbeloved, yet standing on that cold pinnacle a queen expectant with aggrieved and stormy nobles round—the Earl Archibald died. He was buried in the church where his daughter was newly married. Joan was there before him. You may see their graves still, beneath a large marble stone in the east end of the choir.

Then comes the bitter sorrow of which all the world has heard. How the prince neglected his wife, made her brother his enemy, and was thrown into a dungeon to die; how the governor's daughter walked in the garden with cakes hidden for him in her veil; how the country nurse gave him milk through a chink in his prison wall; how the stolen ministries were discovered, and both women suffering death, the prince was left friendless to his fate, and died in his palace cell;—all this has been told in saddest song and story.

Of Marjory his wife we hear nothing more. She returns to the shadow land. And the river gleams quietly as of old, singing its dreamy song among the flushing orchards of the priory, and under Joan's towers. The Bloody-Veined-Dock is in Bothwell woods, the Yellow Figwort, the Ivy-Leaved Toad-Flax flourish on the castle walls. But the silent flowers tell no story, nor the faithful water which reflects all yet keeps no tell-tale images for curious future years.

The daughter of the prince and Marjory became the Lady Lochow, and bought the land along the Clyde which was called St. Ninian's Croft. Here she built a leper's hospital, that favourite mediæval charity, in fervent imitation of St. Catherine of Siena and St. Frances of Rome and many other noble ladies. She was gentle and kind and devout say the only memorials of her. An old street in Glasgow preserves the name of her charity.

As for the castle by the riverside, it kept its stately romance as long as it was possible for romance to linger by a northern river. Indeed, the romance out of history is quite endless in kind and full of the fine stimulants of distance and surprise. Bring your atom of imagination, and all the rest is given. The mysteries in old forest shadows, the desolate music rung by rivers that have wandered through a mythical past, provide generous escapes from the prose of life for those to whom escape is possible.

For romance proper is spiritual expansion. It makes demands on self-negation; it requires you to leave yourself behind with the every day world of your existence. It reverses the charm of the novel which glorifies your own life, and makes you content with its commonplace, discovering to you that you are yourself hero or heroine every day of your life, or may be if you will practise a few sweet arts which always make life the fairer. But that is a gracious gift, to be received with praise, which enables you to fly, without evading duty, from the vortex of busy

realities into strange beautiful worlds never trod by mortal feet. Here there is unfevered enjoyment;—no emulation; for who would seek to imitate the Cid? no envy; for who desires Kriemhild's beauty? no apprehension; for La Beale Isoud beside the fountain, and Palamides sleeping by the gate, are too far off to be friends or foes, or touch us in any way that has the least appeal to self.

To live the ideal life side by side with the real—if you have the sweet gift—accept it in lieu of many others. Indeed, it is more than possible you cannot choose but thus. Schiller's charming song of the first division of the world is not after all so fanciful as you may wish to believe. There is without doubt a division. And if to you has fallen the heritage of beautiful capacities—the gift of living silently and secretly in a loftier realm than the feet of all men penetrate—you have no right to covet the other sorts of wealth of him who perhaps never stole one glance down the vista you call your own. You have your kingdom and he has his, and yours is the richer of the two.

The river in the shady silence is full of fine accords. Its dower of romance, you are persuaded, came to it with the green leaves. Its beauty is its own. The castle and the priory merely emphasise its loveliness, which is full of the delicious complexities of shadows, and tender simplicities of flowers. That hunger and thirst for the beautiful which impels the painter in his art—for which sight is not enough, for which you

seem still to want a faculty large enough to receive the whole—is an experience more usual when far distances lure the thought than where green shadows close it in with branches your hand may explore.

But a river with deep shadows has the sentiment of distance in it. It haunts you with premonition or reminiscence too vague to grasp, forethought or afterthought, you know not which it may be. Is it that it keeps the echoes of a thousand old and gentle lives, the echoes of the early story of a faint eternity whose morning twilight was here for which evening twilight falls never?

There lies, when the sky is darkest, the intensest silver on the sea. The obscurities of the past make possible the whitest illuminations of the thought. That old and silent world has left to each of us our legacies—legacies of character, of temperament, perhaps our loves, perhaps our aversions, born within us from the strong rulers or the patient workers of that early time, which gleams on us down through the ages with friendly, kindred eyes. The beautiful laughter that awoke from little children's voices; the sudden smiles on peasant faces among the new-cut corn; the patience through long twilight; the sterner sorrow to be met on the wolds without dew of tears,—these are the same, and the waters they also are the same. They gleam on humble ferns and mosses, but they are wandering to the sea; beyond this cold depth of darkness there is a glimmer of gold; the

shadows are lengthening on the grass, but the river will seek the sunset.

And the river, as nothing else, bears all the music of the past, its chords enriched age by age, and new harmonies made always possible. It has no new tones, but endless new combinations of beauty and melodious measure.

The old battles are repeated and fought till the end of time. And still the true soldiers are proved, and made gentle and strong and wise, by spears shivered and helmets dented and the breach mounted many times over before the fort is won. All faithful life is feudalism—obedience and courage and truth, and love uplifted into purer air as the battle closes round. And still the true soldier must turn aside to “the hermitage in the fair forest,” and keep many vigils there of prayer and steadfastness and faith.

Between the castle and the convent the river has long flowed in peace. The birds go to rest in the branches that wreath the arched windows and tower; the stars come out in peace in the solemn northern sky—the Pleiades trembling with influence as sweet as when Job and his friends watched them above the desert and the palms.

THE YARROW.

"O sole thing sweeter than thine own songs were!"

—*Swinburne.*



ER life's revelation came with Prince Ferdinand, and Mirando's heart went forth as the petals of the bindweed to the sun. There are scenes which we greet thus, or by which, more truly, we are greeted; mysteriously responsive combinations of water and green grass, landscapes which are interpretations, which we love as Mirando loved the prince, which we love as Narcissus loved himself when his own face looked back upon him from the Greek stream. The years create quickly reserves in sensitive souls; the culture which life's joys and sorrows effect disguises the sentiments; feeling blends more and more with thought; imagination with memory. Then the intensified consciousness reverts to nature's face to seek there the delicate reflections scarcely sought before, the response which a few combinations of simple things give. The heart thus deepened and

refined by the poetry of its own life finds what it loves supremely in the Vale of Yarrow. It is the landscape whose sentiment reveals our own. It is Mirando's Ferdinand.

But having thus premised, one must contradict the inference: for Ferdinand was Mirando's first love, as the Yarrow is not likely to be yours. One fancies it is not the stream which will earliest captivate the heart. Something we must bring with us, or it is not the Yarrow of song. When our lives are steeped in the langours of many set suns; when the keen sorrows of youth are softened in aerial perspective; when we have ceased to make any exactions of nature but the simple repose of peace; it is then, but not till then, we love with this strange foregone love, half a serene recognition, half a bewildering surprise, such silent, sympathetic, enfolding, admonitory, reminiscent greennesses of hills.

They make no demands upon our gratitude or wonder, but give, as all tenderest love gives, with a large unasking beneficence. There are no coyneesses in them to excite unrequited longing; no points with possible distances which elude the efforts they stimulate; no shadows whose unseen realities you puzzle yourself to explain. Such is the manner of mountain peaks, but not of the green hills of Yarrow.

The clouds fling their shadow over these; this is all. The soft and quiet stream meanders where it will, the long grass not staying its waters, yet

fringing them with tremulous lines. Here and there a nimble trout or "the little fish that loves the water-thyme," the fleet shadowy grayling gives a delicate life to the stillness. The angler goes on his tranquil way fishing up the Yarrow. And above is the depth of the long brackens, and the first tint of purple on the heather, yet heather that has no monopoly, but shares all the hillside with the ferns. The solitude steals down upon you with almost too utter a silence;—that silence aggrieving in its tenderness, that sweet and lonely melancholy which is a passion like love. It steals the strength from you; it dissolves you in mysterious pleasure, which yet, with a fine contrariety, you persist in believing to be pain. No mountain peaks have in them the strange embosoming sorrow of those green round pastoral hills, fold beyond fold. The fittest setting was already made for all their song and story, made in their dewy places, in their softness, their silences.

They have like Shakespeare a literature of their own. Why has the stream been written of and sung in such endless ways that it is almost impossible to say anything new of Yarrow? Yet no one wanders among those immemorial hills, with their gentle reticence of beauty, their perfect serenity of charm, and really asks the question with any wonder or doubt. It is an *ideal* landscape; not *picturesque*, but *ideal* in the sense of both painter and poet. Hazlitt in defining the difference of the epithets has indeed so well defined the character of the Vale of

Yarrow, one is tempted to quote his own words, and simply transpose them from the region of Rubens and Claude, to the region of this pasture land.

"The picturesque is that which stands out, and catches the attention by some striking peculiarity; the ideal is that which answers to the preconceived imagination and appetite in the mind for love and beauty. The picturesque depends chiefly on the principle of discrimination or contrast; the ideal on harmony or continuity of effect: the one surprises; the other satisfies the mind: the one starts off from a given point, the other reposes on itself; the one is determined by an excess of form, the other by a concentration of feeling. . . . I imagine that Rubens' landscapes are picturesque; Claude's are ideal. Rubens is always in extremes; Claude in the middle. Rubens carries some one peculiar quality or feature of nature to the utmost verge of probability; Claude balances and harmonizes different forms and masses with laboured delicacy, so that nothing falls short, no one thing overpowers another. He is all softness and proportion. . . . The ideal, in a word, is the height of pleasing, that which satisfies and accords with the inmost longing of the soul."

Among all Scottish landscapes the Vale of Yarrow is the Claude—has eminently that *ideal* quality which pleases by "concentration of feeling" as opposed to "excess of form," has that something "which satisfies and accords with the inmost longing of the soul." A harmonious calm broods over its conscious water; a

certain sweet balanced beauty informs the retirement of its hills. The pathos of an old pastoral blends with a supreme repose as of the lives of many ages lived in changeless story on its banks. Its air is redolent of the same sweet conservatism as breathes round an old manor, with high dormer windows hung out among the ivy wreaths, and battlemented porch that has seen the farewells and welcomes of a score of generations of sons. There is over it a restful breeding. It has nothing harsh nor new. The birches and the alders, the long brakens and the heather, make a perfect harmony as of things that have lived and loved and grown old together. Each accords with all. The scale of colour is the simplest to be found. You exhaust the tones of green and gray and nothing more is left. The vale is without contrast. The painter must improvise an incident to give the hues his art requires.

But over this vale the sky broods, as it surely scarcely broods elsewhere, comes down to it, embraces it, becomes a part of the landscape. The very featurelessness of the hills and water makes them apt for a tragedy. Nature obtrudes itself nowhere; it is pervasive and at rest. Nature was ready for the tragedy; and the tragedy was told. What was it? No one knows.

Is there an irony of sweetness in the green folding hills? in the whispering of the lonely water through the soft and tranquil holms? Old echoes of ballads taken up and echoed again; snatches sung over

cradles for many a hundred years; and, far in the early mist, an hour of fearfulest love and strife which has never ceased, nor can cease, to moan among the green hills;—these are the things which are kept secret in this the sweet Claude of landscapes among the waving of the brakens and the scent of the low wild thyme.

If you would penetrate this mystery, you must learn the songs the minstrels sung. You cannot know Yarrowdale till you know its early harp lore. Yet to love the old ballads truly you must have known them from your cradle; you must, in the first years, when all the world was young, have been haunted by some wild couplet of passionate melodious grief; you must have heard it rung from lips that were tender and beloved while you yet had so few sorrows of your own as to love best like Genevieve the songs that made you grieve. You must not come in the coldness of ripe years, to a book of ballads as to a book of science, to dissolve with your keen criticism the glamour of Burd Helen and Fair Maisry's love. You must take the maidens to your heart in their beauty—snoods and kirtles, and long fair hair;—the bold moss-troopers also—Sweet Willie and Fair Lord Thomas, who broke lances, and forded rivers at the flood, and tirmed the pin at castle yetts, and sang at bower windows. You must not even smile at some constantly recurring stanza. For the minstrels were simple and generous, and gave and took freely, with frank, ingenuous grace, even as

the old painters, the couplet or figure they desired. Because Minstrel Home had used it should Minstrel Burne reject it—the symbol offered by Nature, and surely offered to all? The snow-flakes melting on St. Mary's Loch, or the brambles blackening by the Yarrow, or the budding of the first white rose, or the fall of the last late petals—or the goldening of the birch tree, or the twining of boughs that loved—if any new hidden symbolism were discovered in these common things, should not all who loved the songs of minstrels rejoice in this treasure trove? It were a refinement of courtesy not asked by the minstrel guild, that the name of the first who sang the song should be preluded by all future singers.

Indeed, the names of the minstrels are very rarely known; the date of their songs never. But that they tenderly loved their art, and much magnified its honour, Bishop Percy has taught the reader who is curious in old song. Of the Anglo Saxon harpers, the successors of the Scandinavian Scalds—of the harpers royal and peasant, who made songs for the king's court and songs for the village green; of the princes and the lovers who wandered in harpers' disguise through the fair land of Provence, and over the Scottish borders, he is likely to learn enough if he love the songs of the Yarrow. He will also without doubt learn early their favourite symbol—the intertwisting of the birch and the rose over the grave of lovers.

This tender conceit has indeed a classical reminis-

ence; has dropped from the Greek anthology into the Gothic song. The "spring trees" that knotted together from the graves of Protesilaus and Laodamia are the parents of endless boughs wove together in the Border ballads. For love, strife, faithfulness, and death, is the one long continual strain of the ballad poetry of the Yarrow. These are rung continually over the water and the braes, with all the iteration and variety of a sole beloved melody.

There is but one exception preserved to us—one ballad of the Yarrow which has no note of love or war. The name of the singer, "Minstrel Burne," has come down with his song, "Leader-Haughs and Yarrow,"—a long lament for the old times that were passing from the Border country. The ballad is indeed little more than a catalogue of storied names.

"In Burnmill Bog and Whiteslade shaws
The fearful hare she haunteth,
Brighaugh and Braidwoodsheil she knows,
And Chapel-Wood frequenteth.

Yet when she irks to Kadsley birks
She rins and sighs for sorrow,
That she should leave sweet Leader-Haughs
And cannot win to Yarrow.

The bird that flees through Reedpath trees
And Gledswood bank ilk morrow,
May chant and sing sweet Leader-Haughs
And bonny howlms of Yarrow.

But Minstrel Burne cannot assuage
His grief, while life endureth,

To see the changes of this age
That fleeting time procureth.

For many a place stands in hard case
Where blyth folks kenned nae sorrow;
With Homes that dwelt on Leaderside,
And Scots that dwelt on Yarrow."

This is not a characteristic ballad, nor does it bear much trace of antiquity. It keeps the poetry of names, and that is all. Its singer had come in a late time of song when every nook had gathered a story—when but to name Whiteslade Shaw and Kaidasley Birks, and Reedpath trees and sweet Leader-Haugh's excited all the Border enthusiasm, and suggested more than song could sing; when its measure, without note of love or war, was a deep reverberation of both. But it is not the characteristic ballad of the Yarrow which lingers on its own love and sorrow.

One of these is kept in Ritson's collection, all its story told in the simple title; "Rare Willie, drowned in Yarrow." It has no particular merit; your fancy must aid the poetry. You must see in the dawning gray the pale snooded face of the singer come down among the red tangled roses of the water-side, with love's despair in her eye; you must see her leave behind her St. Mary's Loch with the water-lilies gleaming in the early shadows of the hills; and understand her pleading question of the gathered rose and lily, for the dead face of her lover might look back from among the flowers.

“Willie’s rare and Willie’s fair,
And Willie’s wondrous bonnie,
And Willie heght to marry me,
Gin ere he married ony.

O cam ye by yon waterside,
Pu’d ye the rose or lily,
Or cam ye by yon meadow green,
Or saw ye my sweet Willie?

She sought him east, she sought him west,
She sought him braid and narrow,
Syne in the cleaving of a craig,
She found him drowned in Yarrow.”

A ballad which is not ancient, but the product of
of a century ago, has yet caught happily enough the
spirit of the early singer, and seems to linger on
some such story as “Rare Willie, drowned in Yarrow.”
It was written by “Mr John Logan, one of the
ministers of Leith.”

“Thy braes were bonnie, Yarrow stream,
When first on them I met my lover;
Thy braes how dreary, Yarrow stream,
When now thy waves his body cover.

For ever now, O Yarrow stream,
Thou art to me a stream of sorrow,
For never on thy banks shall I
Behold my love, the flower o’ Yarrow.

His mother from the window looked,
With all the longing of a mother;
His little sister weeping walked
The greenwood path to meet her brother.

They sought him east, they sought him west,
They sought him all the forest thorough,
They only saw the cloud of night,
They only heard the roll of Yarrow.

‘The tear shall never leave my cheek,
‘Na other youth shall be my marrow,
‘I’ll seek thy body in the stream,
‘And then wi’ thee I’ll sleep in Yarrow.’”

Of “The Dowie Dens of Yarrow,” there are many versions. It is said to be very old—too old to bear any date,—one of those dark tragedies which the feuds of the Middle Ages made always too fearfully possible. Scott was the first who lifted it from the mobile lips of the people and gave it a place among written song in his “Border Minstrelsy.” The genius of Sir Neol Paton has further modernized its interest. His last illustration of the Dowie Dens of Yarrow has caught all the poetry of the ballad in the dead faces of the lovers. His is a weary, ghastly face, half opened eyes, half parted lips; hers utterly at peace, resting close beside it, with a smile of triumph as of one crowned in death. And far beyond the castle turrets, and the softly flowing Yarrow, the moon, rising over the green braes, makes wierdness of repose.

“Yestreen I dreamed a dolefu’ dream,
I fear there will be sorrow,
I dreamed I pu’d the heather green
Wi’ my true love on Yarrow.

O gentle wind that bloweth south
To where my love reparaeth,
Convey a kiss to his dear mouth
And tell me how he fareth.

But in the glen strive armed men,
They've wrought me dool and sorrow,
They've slain, the comeliest knight they've slain,
He bleeding lies on Yarrow.

As she sped down yon high, high hill,
She gaed wi' dool an' sorrow,
And in the den spied ten slain men,
On the dowie howms o' Yarrow.

She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
She searched his wounds a' thorough,
She kissed him till his lips grew red,
On the dowie braes o' Yarrow.

'Now haud your peace, my daughter dear,
For a' this breeds but sorrow,
I'll wed ye to a better lord
Than him ye've lost on Yarrow.'

'O haud your peace, my father dear,
Ye mind me but o' sorrow,
A fairer rose did never bloom
Than now lies cropped in Yarrow.'

She kissed his cheek, she kaimed his hair,
As she had done before O,
Then wi' ae sigh her heart did break,
On the dowie holms o' Yarrow."

Although Scott was the first who printed this ballad at length, it is said that a fragment containing

the dream of the lady only is found in several early collections. "Old-fashioned poetry, but choicely good," it has never lost its charm: for have not all loved, have not all sorrowed? and the imagination is quick enough to re-live the life of the heart. The curious, fatal superstition of plucking green heather in a dream, gives the story at once the tragic interest of some expectant terror. Yet the vision itself, without its symbol, is only one of love and happiness.

"I dreamed I pu'd the heather green,
Wi' my true love on Yarrow."

That the long, ling heather which mantles the loneliest Scottish hills and moors, should be rich in its own peculiar superstitions is never to be marvelled over, nor that as the white heather flower has been chosen as expressive of favour and joy, the dim, green wastes of the flowerless shrub should symbolize coming sorrow. In the simple fervour of the old passionate strain, the dream of the maiden in three little words preludes all the pain, yet has, withal, the sweet charm of nature which obliterates the years between. Of the ballads of the Ettrick Forest this is the best known and loved, the wild pathetic tragedy of *The Dowie Dens of Yarrow*.

The Tragedy of the Black Douglas, which has scarcely shared its popularity, is nevertheless full of those same vivid pictures which the minstrel hand could touch so well.

“She held his steed in her milk-white hand,
And never shed one tear
Until that she saw her seven brethren fa’,
And her father hard fighting who loved her sae dear.

‘Oh hold your hand, Lord William,’ she said,
‘For your strokes they are wondrous sair,
True lovers I can get mony a ane,
But a father I can never get mair.’

‘O chuse, O chuse, Lady Margaret,’ he said,
Whether will ye gang or bide ;’
‘I’ll gang, I’ll gang, Lord William,’ she said,
For you have left me nae other guide.’

He’s lifted her on a milk-white steed,
And himself on a dapple-gray,
With a bugelet horn hung down by his side,
And slowly they baith rade away.

O they rade on, and on they rade,
And a’ by the light o’ the moon,
Until they came to yon wan water,
And there they lighted down.

They lighted down to tak’ a drink
O’ the spring that ran sae clear,
And down the stream ran his guid heart’s bluid,
And sair she ’gan to fear.

‘Hold up, hold up, Lord William,’ she said,
‘For I fear that ye are slain.’
‘Tis naething but the shadow o’ my scarlet cloak,
That shines in the water sae plain.’

O they rade on, and on they rade,
A’ by the light o’ the moon,

Until they came to his mother's ha' door,
And there they lighted down.

'Get up, get up, Lady Mother,' he said,
'Get up and let me in ;
'Get up, get up, Lady Mother,' he said,
'For this night I've my fair Lady win.'

Lord William was dead lang ere midnight,
Lady Margaret lang ere day ;
And a' true lovers that love as they did,
May they have mair luck than they.

Lord William was buried in St. Marie's kirk,
Lady Margaret in Marie's quier ;
Out o' the lady's grave grew a bonnie red rose,
And out o' the Knight's a briere.

And they twa met, and they twa platt,
As fain they would be near,
And a' the world might ken fu' weel
They were twa lovers dear.

But by and rade the Black Douglas,
An' wow but he was rough,
For he pulled up the bonny briere
And flung it in St. Mary's Loch."

The same tender fancy of the loves of the green things which grew from lovers' graves beside the Yarrow, is preserved in the still more romantic ballad of "Lord Thomas and Fair Annet."

"Lord Thomas and Fair Annet
Sat a' day on a hill ;
When night was come and sun was set,
They had not talked their fill.

Lord Thomas said a word in jest,
Fair Annet took it ill;
'O I will never wed a wife
Against my ain friend's will.'

'Gif ye will never wed a wife,
A wife will ne'er wed ye;'
So he is hame to tell his mother,
And knelt upon his knee.

'O rede me, rede me, mother,' he says,
'A gude rede give to me,
O sall I tak the nut-brown bride,
And let Fair Annet be?'

'The nut-brown bride has gold and gear,
Fair Annet she has got nane,
And the little beauty Fair Annet has,
O it will soon be gaen.'

And he has till his brother gaen,
'Now brother rede ye me,
O shall I marry the nut-brown bride,
And let Fair Annet be?'

'The nut-brown bride has oxen, brother,
The nut-brown bride has kye,
I would have ye marry the nut-brown bride,
And cast Fair Annet by.'

And he has till his sister gaen,
'Now sister rede ye me,
O sall I marry the nut-brown bride,
And set Fair Annet free?'

'I'se rede ye take Fair Annet, Thomas,
An' let the brown bride alane,

Lest ye should sigh an' say alack,
What is this I've brought hame?'

'No, I will tak' my mother's counsel,
And marry out o' hand;
An' I will tak' the nut brown bride;
Fair Annet may leave the land.'

Up then rose Fair Annet's father,
Twa hours ere it were day,
An' he is gaen into the bower,
Wherein Fair Annet lay.

'Rise up, rise up, Fair Annet,' he says,
'Put on your silken sheen,
Let us go to St. Marie's kirk,
An' see this gay weddeen.'

The horse Fair Annet rade upon,
He ambled like the wind,
Wi' silver he was shod before,
Wi' burning gold behind.

Four and twenty silver bells
Were tyed till his mane,
And at ae tift o' the Norland wind
They tinkled ane by ane.

Four and twenty gay gude knights
Rade by Fair Annet's side;
And four an' twenty gay ladies,
As gin she had been a bride.

An' when she came to St. Marie's kirk,
She sat on St. Marie's stane,
The clothing that Fair Annet had on
It sparkled in their een.

D.

And when she came into the kirk
She shimmered like the sun,
The belt that was about her waist
Was a' wi' pearls bedone.

She sat her by the nut-brown bride,
An' her een they were sae clear,
Lord Thomas, he clean forgot the bride,
When Fair Annet she drew near.

He had a rose into his hand,
An' he gave it kisses three,
An' reaching it by the nut-brown bride,
Laid it on Fair Annet's knee.

Up then spake the nut-brown bride,
She spake wi' mickle spite,
'An' where gat ye that rose-water
That makes ye look sae white?'

The bride she drew a long bodkin
Frae out her gay head-gear,
And struck Fair Annet into the heart
That word she never spake mair.

Lord Thomas he saw Fair Annet wax pale,
And marveled what might be,
But when he saw her dear heart's blood,
A wood wroth waxed he.

'Now, stay for me, dear Annet,' he said;
'Now, stay, my dear,' he cry'd,
An' struck his dagger into his heart,
An' fell dead at her side.

Lord Thomas was buried without the kirk wa,
Fair Annet within the quier,

An' o' the tane there grew a birk,
An' the other a bonnie briere.

An' ay they grew, an' aye they threw
As they would fain be near;
An' by this ye may ken right weel,
They were twa lovers dear.

Of this little Kirk of St. Marie's, the scene of such border bridals and burials, and so many tragedies untold, scarcely a trace remains. The church-yard is marked by the greener grass among the long brakens, by a clump of birk and rowan trees, by the new graves of the Ettrick shepherds which are still made among the old. The unappropriated sorrow of the nameless old world tragedies floats among the long partings that every summer brings anew; that have no times nor fashions, but come as changeless and unchallenged as the sympathetic Yarrow moaning among its green braes.

You live but a few decades till you learn that the half of life is sorrowful; never the less beautiful for that, nor the less a good gift. The nameless lives are the lovely ones among those green holms, the true men and women who fought, unhonoured, unpraised, a good fight to the end, and left their unconscious virtues as silent dews upon the holms of Yarrow. For the dews are not mostly shed by the lives that have lived in story, but the shady lives that grew beautiful out of long desire, and patient with the sweet transmutation which you call contentment, which perhaps was the blossom of despair.

Mingled with the graves of the shepherds are the graves of less simple borderers, whose lives had yet no space to be reflex in that time of foray and feud—whose virtues were the primitive virtues of courage, devotion and faithfulness, and the tremulous, passionate tenderness which never dies out of their song. Their graves are among the brakens, but St. Marie's Kirk is gone, with the border bridals and the border burials, and the silence of all the yesterdays.

Might one offer a single fragment from a ballad of the reign of James V.—another ballad of the Vale of Yarrow, called “The song of the Outlaw Murray”? Ettrick Forest, it may be explained to the reader unfamiliar on the borders, contained the whole shire of Selkirk, the land through which the Yarrow flows. The “fair castle” of the outlaw stood on the banks of the Yarrow. It is many years since the last trace of its “lyme and stane” disappeared, but tradition still preserves the lonely, lovely spot where the Tower of Hangingshawe rose high on the banks of the stream.

“Ettrick forest is a fair forest,
In it grows many a seemly tree;
There's hart and hynde and doe and roe,
And of a' wild beasts great plentie.
There's a fair castell bigged of lyme and stane,
O gin it stands not pleasantly,
In the forefront o' that castle fair,
Twa unicorns are brow to see;
There's a picture of a knight and a lady bright,
An the green hollin abune their bree.

'There an outlaw keeps five hundred men,
He keeps a royal company,

His merry men are a' in ae livery clad,
In the Lincoln green sae gae to see ;
He an his lady in purple clad,
O gin they lived not royally.

Word is gane to our nobil king,
In Edinboro where that he lay ;
That there was an outlaw in Ettrick forest,
Counted him nought nor his countrie gay.

I will make a vow then the gude king said,

I'se either be king of Ettrick forest,
Or king of Scotland that outlaw sall be."

To James Fourth's summons to surrender, the outlaw on the banks of the Yarrow sends back a message as defiant as was ever received by a monarch.

"He says yon forest is his ain,
He won it frae the southronrie ;
Sae as he won it, sae will he keep it,
Contrair all kings in Christendie."

A compromise was made between the king and the outlaw, by which the pride of both was appeased. For Murray gave up to the king the key of his castle on the Yarrow, and the king made Murray and his heirs perpetual sheriffs of the forest.

"The keys of the castle he gave the king,
Wi' the blessing of his fair ladye ;
He was made sheriff of Ettrick forest
Surely while upward grows the tree ;
And, if he was never traitor to the king,
Forfeited he should never be."

But the ballad music has died along the Yarrow long, long ago. The silence that broods on the green holms is the silence of forsaken places. Where the moss-troopers rode, the sheep-walks are made now. Where the "silver bells" of Fair Annet rang on the Norland wind there is only the bleating of the little lambs, and the silence answering them. In the mirror of the quiet stream where Lord William's scarlet cloak gleamed as he stooped, hot from battle, to drink with his stolen bride, only the lonely angler snatching rest from some busier world, gathering into his life the silence which broods on the charmed lonely hills.

A few years ago there lingered by her fireside nook the venerable storied figure of Christopher North's Tibbie Shields;—a tranquil aged woman, bearing traces of her early beauty, and with still a kind word to spare, yet resenting, with the rustic dignity she must have worn among her earlier friends the intrusive familiarity of the strangers to whom she was one of the things to be seen in a day's excursion to the Yarrow. She too is at rest now among her own green braes, and with her the early song and story recedes silently farther away.

In her youth the old ballads were said or sung at every hearth in Yarrowdale. They made the music of the long winter nights while the wool was carded and spun. Now, some aged peasant will tell you with a covert reproach in his tone, since the ballads were gathered into books the people sing them no

more. The young men and maidens know them only as they know school-lore. Their oral music is lost; the tunefulness gathered at "ewe-milking," at sheep-shearing, at the folds at evening time.

But the charm of the green soft hills where these were once sung can never be lost till the human heart has unlearned its own life. They are places to be haunted always by love and soft thoughts; like *Mirando* with her prince we still "change eyes" with the hills. Wordsworth has made their beauty classic, lingering with love upon their traits for their own loveliness, as the ballads do not linger.

For the ballads are too full of their own impassioned story to turn aside to the flowers or the hillsides or the waters except for that story's need. Wordsworth was not impassioned, and he marked, with his quiet "gentle eye,"

"The swan on still *St. Mary's lake*
Float double, swan and shadow."

He had leisure of heart to record

"A silvery current flows
With uncontrolled meanderings,
Nor have these eyes by greener hills
Been soothed in all my wanderings.

Through all its depths *St. Mary's lake*
Is visibly delighted;
For not a feature of those hills
Is in its mirror alighted."

BY THE SANNOX BURN.

"Our feet were soft in flowers. There was store
 Of newest joys upon that Alp. Sometimes
 A scent of violets
 then of honey cells
 Made delicate from all white flower bells."

—Keats.



YOU have gathered the edelweiss and the snow gentian among the rose-lights of the Alps. You have cleft the ice of the Matterhorn, you have lived in the dream of the Jura, you have loved the vale of Chamouni with a full meed of love. Have you spent any lingering autumn days among the miniature mountains of the Clydè? Do you know the Burn of Glen Sannox? If you never have trod its heather you yet may know its portraiture. For it is a stream beloved of the painter who haunts its purple silence, and makes nearly the one life interest in the solitude of the Glen. And you love the landscape painter because he loves the Sannox Burn. How patient and pure is his art, asking nothing and

yielding all ! As the relief of self expression, poetry is nothing to painting ; for painting is relief without confession, a solace covertly. Your love for a certain sonnet is an autobiography, the trill of your voice in a little song reveals an episode ; to own your favourite idyll would be to discover some sweet, hidden, delicate thing, which has trembled down through your life, kept fragrant by its namelessness. But who shall guess what it means when you linger on the painter's sky ? Who shall divine the love and faith with which you light his evanescent greens, or know that his pearly water is bright with your own tears ? You catch from his foreground some small lovely bits, some shadows of flowers on flowers ; you take them into your arcana of beauty, you transmute them secretly to the faint primroses and the sentiments of long ago. This love, as still as the dark tarn where the lilies and mints and buttercups float beside their own double, why should you say what it means ? The painter asks nothing. His sky breaks over you, his clouds enfold you in their dreams, down his long perspective your thoughts have leave to go astray. You find your unspoken joys, your half-acknowledged sorrows in his illuminations and obscurities, you find them in the glory of his aerial vistas, in the gold and the purple and the crimson, in the mysterious splendours of his fading, fainting seas. It is your story that is told in his contrasts of tempest and of calm, in the sweet and awful lights which never were on sea or shore. You

find your own life in his distances, the wistful hopes which died when they were born, the faiths which you keep unwhispered, the loves which need no voice. This, certainly, is not "the artistic enjoyment of pictures," but perhaps it is the poetic enjoyment; it is at least the human love. The white umbrella of the painter is a friendly signal in the glen. He is translating for you the things which you cannot translate. Doubtless, indeed, you have tried, and found a delicious pleasure in your own alphabetic efforts. If you have lingered by the Sannox Burn with no such superb futilities, you are still a tyro in delight. What an exhilarating fear in laying your colour box on a boulder, and filling your tiny painting pail with water from the mountain stream! The necessity of imitation is on you, the human feeling after the divine, the need in some faint way to make the perfect loveliness your own. You do not attempt to gather the mists, or flash the sunbeams on the castled granite of the peaks that dominate the glen. But the tuft of waxy bell heather (as you learn to call it here, although it is not a heather but a heath), its large creamy umbel of flowers, each tipped with the faintest rose, and some great golden humble-bee poised, in an audible ecstasy, on the brink of the delicate cup; those whorls of small, rich green spines, those stains of lichen on the rock, these —; and yet you may not. Lay sketching-block and brushes by, leave that friendly brown-pink, which serves for everything,

to dry or waste upon your palette; yield yourself wholly to the mountain stream—yield your senses passively.

Cybo of the Golden Island might, long summer after summer, "draw and paint in a wonderful manner" the birds and flowers round him for his missals. The Mediterranean sea washed his yellow sands with blue waves. He was not disquieted by nature in her constant freaks of terror and storm. When the spirit of the glen has possessed you, you imitate no more. You are content to see with simply receptive eyes, content only to love, content to acknowledge the unattainable. The water has torn through the granite, and comes down in still brown pools and tumultuous white cascades which flash high and higher on the hillsides, like flakes of perpetual snow. And among the wet rocks and spray clings the loveliest, tenderest leafage. If you wish fragile, lovely greenery seek a mountain water-side. Nature exhausts her tenderness in the shadow of the boulders of the glen. There are those who will never cease to think of Arran as the sweetest place in the world. The rose-gardens of Damascus, the cinnamon shades of Ceylon, the fire-fly lighted banyan groves beneath the Indian night—these have but material loveliness; this spiritual. Here the mists are more tender than dreams; the rains are such rains of blessing as the Hebrew prophets saw in vision; the great granite peaks of the island have cleft their hearts for the flowers. Lying in the

Firth of the river Clyde, it has ignored its latitude ; in the open borders you may winter your greenhouse plants, your fuchsias, myrtles, geraniums. As for common things, the bog-myrtle is the wildest wilding of the island ; while the hardy fuchsia, with its vivid leaves and small dropping coral flowers, embosoms the ruined cottage amongst brambles and elder trees, covers the forsaken hearth in warm, tender munificence.

If England is supreme in woodland, has Scotland not the glory of flowers ? There are no Spanish chesnuts in the north like the old splendours of Epping, no oaks like the scarred patriarchs of Richmond and the New Forest, no elms like the ancestral trees of the English village green. But the sunniest glade of forest—is not its flora surpassed in the minute loveliness hid among the boulders of a northern stream ? One may suggest ; no more. One must speak delicately as of a friend to a friend, knowing how flowers are cherished, how tenderly loved and nurtured in the sweetness of English homes. One has not forgotten some gentle gardener to whom age came so graciously, her “ step seemed to pity the grass it pressed ; ”

“ the flowers of whose garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet.”
You “ doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

“ She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier bands ;

If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly."

How she walked with love and gentle pride in her petted rosary at home, among her weeping Ayrshires and tender little Banksians, and her Bourbons and Noisettes—canary, cream, pink, salmon, carmine, crimson almost to blackness. But her white superb Niphetos sickened of a nameless disease; the great buds of *La Reine* refused to open to the sun; the delicious Scotch Stanwell faded before its time; the darling *Devoniensis*, which clustered round her favourite window in white fragrance for three bright summers or more, suddenly forgot its sweet duty, and would not be wooed with longing, or the daintiest offerings of love. You remembered then the wild white Scotch roses, high up between the myrtle and the heather, which you gathered long ago when a child, where the hill begins to slope to the Sannox. Sweet mountain roses, with no guardians but the winds of heaven, and their own lovely pink thorny stems to ward off moorfowl or deer! How their large creamy petals rejoiced the solitude with a very waste of loveliness, a prodigality of beauty that had no stint or end.

Is the comparison unnecessary? Have you but the English lanes to seek, to find the same sweet health and wealth of wildness in contrast with the delicate rosarium? Having a northern sympathy, one ventures to answer, not quite the same. One hazards the paradox that the rose is above all a

Scottish flower, that some unguessed genius in Scotland is peculiarly kind to roses, having by that law of compensation, in nature so abundant and benign, given, with the storm and cloud, this floral beatitude.

You gather them with the early heather and the lingering primroses, Spring and Summer and Autumn together in your hand. For the primroses tarry long in these cool clefts of rocks, like the long sweetness of youth kept sometimes in a shady life. Far from the roses on the hill-side you shall find in the shadow of the glen the beautiful Rooting Bristle Fern, moist and shining continually in the foam of the mountain torrent. You may seek it long in vain in other neighbourhoods; for it is dainty of its home, and, among all coyest nooks north and south in the island, has made choice of Glen Sannox alone, or nearly alone. In Ireland it has found a cascade on the shores of the Lake of Killarney; in Wicklow it has found a nook in the shadow of Hermitage Glen; in some uncertain spot on Yorkshire also, but the "British Flora" affirms it is scarcely elsewhere to be discovered. The wind gathers on the mountains and shrieks down the shadows of the gorge. The sunbeams, for but a brief hour each day, penetrate its deepest place. But the rare beautiful fern does not need the sun; it can grow as nobly in the dark, like a grace in adversity, tender and brave in the cool places where the bittern hides at noon. What so sweet as to cool your hand in the spray of the

mountain water, and lift your moist treasure trove to you with the fondness of first love? And here is the Rock Brake—a rare fern and sweet too, curled like a pretty parsley in a fringe on the burn-side. In the damp hollow of a rock you may find the Maiden-Hair-Spleenwort, with its pale tiny leaflets, and rich umber thread of a stem. Not perhaps within the glen, yet somewhere not far off, you shall find the Royal Osmund, unfamiliar in English woodlands, or in Scotland save here in the West. The noblest fronds found by the botanist have been culled in this Isle of Arran. If your home has a fernery, and you know the sweet ways of its inmates, you are not weary yet. Otherwise you have had enough of these humble things, which are the gipsies of Nature, vagrant and wild and lonely. The rare Alpine Lady's Mantle, sought like a pearl through all the island, you may possibly gather in the glen. But to find the Alpine-Meadow-Rue you must go to the haunt of the ptarmigan, that cries from the high lonely rocks, its brown purple plumage scarce discernible from the browns and purples of the heather and the greens of the Alpine-Rue. A strange, lovely, lonely bird, this ptarmigan, snow-white in the time of snow, the edges of its pure feathers pencilled with gray as tender as the shadows in the mountain drift, its pale speckled eggs laid in June beneath a tuft of fern or in the budding heather. The black grouse and the moorcock come down to the glen to drink; the ptarmigan abides among the

mountains, lonely and wild and shy, and tastes the cold waters at their sources among the nameless rills.

If for four miles you follow the burn up the glen you come to a wall of granite which divides Glen Sannox from Glen Rosa. Here, the torn rocks lie round you, the shadows gather on the hills, already it is evening in the glen. You must turn back. You take heedful steps among the long ling-heather; a red deer meets your path, slowly his proud head lifted, crossing his native purple with something of a monarch's tread. Are you abashed in his kingdom that you turn your face to the sea? There it lies before you with a smile, its islands all nestled somewhere in the warm folds of its blue; the old country of Kyle, long and low, stretching out to meet the sunshine and the waves in a haze of silver and pearl. The hills close you in, the glen has begun to oppress you. There is light and distance on the water—transparency, peace. And on it, like a dark bird, is the brown battered sail of a fishing boat coming in from the lochs. Some one whom you cannot discern is looking out from the shore, where the children are playing, where the fishing nets are drying in the sun. Here, to your heart, you aver that one warm chubby hand, browned and soiled with sea-wreck and sand, is lovelier than the loveliest fern wet by the Sannox water. It was a human instinct which made you turn your eyes thither. You shall be glad to go back to the low, level, golden sand, where the

Sannox in the open sunlight gives up its water to the sea. The white Scotch roses you gathered lower down, the butterfly orchids, large and fragrant and pale, the mile of honey-suckle trellis that hides the old granite coast line, the wastes of bog-myrtle that flood the Corrie shore with their sweetness, all these you recall with love as for far off things. These are visited by the early sunshine, comforted by the ocean psalms; here, within the depth of the glen, is only shadow and purple, and the cry of the moor bird. If you have no friend by your side the silence oppresses you, the visible and the invisible meet too closely here. The glen widens to the sea; you come to the ancient churchyard. In its midst there once stood a church which has long mouldered away: only a rude image of Saint Michael, its patron saint, is preserved in the old wall enclosing the island graves. The hamlet whence the worshippers came has left a few memorials, which are more pathetic than graves; —a stone or two among the long grass where the household fires rose, a few plants ranker than the herbage around, some starry inflorescence, some bright solitary flower outcast from cottage gardens. The luminous reverse of the picture is a brave, patient people far away by the Ottawa and the Mississippi, building up a new world in the sunset from the history of the old. The church of St. Michael is gone, but a little chapel now stands close to the sea, close to the Sannox water, where it loses itself on the shore. Here are abundant violets, gentians, forget-

me-nots ; you can find no sweeter place among the shadows of leaves. A rustic wooden bridge, itself enfolded in the shadows, leads to the quiet church, where the fisher people come from the Corrie shore, and the pastoral people from the hills. The mountain torrent has fretted itself into peace at last. There is no serener water than the Sannox near the sea. What a requiem in its silence as it passes the green graves ! Is it conscious in its stillness ? And the sunny golden sands spread out in the tranquil bay, like an unending Sabbath, like a blessed life's even close. Here and there a white sail melts on the faint horizon, here and there a white sea-gull broods on the charmed wave ; the peaks of the glen darken deeper against the palor of the sky. Then what kindling of the northern stars behind those granite battlements ! What throbbing out of mystery, one by one, of another and another and another, remote, undisturbed watchers of the solitudes of the hills ! How weird the echoes of the glen, where the bittern cries through the darkness, rising up in the tremulous starlight, from its hiding-place among the ferns ! The lonely mountain torrent gives back the lonely stars ;—the gleam of the white cascade threads the blackness of the hollow gorge. The moan of the night-wind in the heather ! It must be rising now. You seem to hear it from far, its loneliness penetrates your heart. It is not pain or fear, it is spiritual isolation in the granite mountains' gloom ; the hand stretching through the shadows to grasp

another Hand, and confronted by the barrier of those immutable forms. A rude voice reaches you, solemn with devotion and faith, and you joyfully find you are close to a hut scarcely seen in the twilight, coloured like the heather and the rock, like the wings of the ptarmigan. "As the mountains are round about Jerusalem" reads the slow peasant voice, "so the Lord is round about His people from henceforth even for evermore." It is the time of the evening sacrifice. The mountain water is at rest, lost in the silence of the shore; the stars are all a-lit in the sky, the silver has faded on the sea, all but one long, faint streak which lingers on the opposite sands of Ayr.

BY THE ALLAN.

"Such wells of comfort cheer earth's resting places,
Such pleasant shades relieve the way we go."

—*Richard Wilton.*



THIS is a place of flowers. What hawthorn blooms to be gathered on the bend of this water of Monteith! What milky wood-sorrels, what gold of celandines, what pink flakes of apple-blossom, what snow from wild cherry trees! And the cry of the coronach has long died away, and the Ochils are as tender with their young grass—as if this were no country of the Graemes. Stirling Castle, a fortress rock, rising out of the level carse, like a watchtower of nature's own, so overwhelmed in history one cannot tread upon the rock but one treads upon a tragedy, one cannot glance right and left from the old ramparts, but one finds a battlefield—yet now bears its state as softly as the "gowlan braes" bear the broom.

Stirling Castle is set on the carse for a picture to be sketched from the water-side. Near its walls you

may gather the sweet violet which is so rare in Scotland, which botanists will tell you is only naturalized there—carried thither from English woodlands by some tender hand long ago. Was it by some maid who came with Queen Margaret from her father's court, and would scatter for sweet memory the violets through the broom, as the king carved the rose with the thistle on the walls of the chambers of the queen? And so you find still the sweet violet, wandering round the castle walls, fragrant and pale with gentle memories and long forgotten adieux.

This gathering of unknown flowers, this sweet naturalization of a delicate stranger, this discovery so pleasing, at which your wiser friends will smile, yet to you so dainty a thing, like a first ambition realized—would the discovery of the sources of the Nile have more delighted the early geographers? Ambitions are relative. You are not a Cleopatra to wear a kingdom like a pearl—you are not a botanist either, nor an herbalist, nor a rosarian; you are simply a lover of flowers, and here round Stirling rock you have found the sweet violet blow. You may never see Philæ. Its temples, its splendour of lights may be all your life but dreams. You may never watch the blue-tailed orioles flash through the chenars of Cashmere, nor hear the reed-birds start in the shadow of the lotus-leaves. Necessity has taught you to be an economist of homely pleasures, and this sunny carse of Stirling is one of the "common things." From any corner of the island you may

reach it in travel which counts but by hours. And here you have found sweet violets, and the Allan water near. Close, quite close to the water you may sit in the mossiest shade, and feel the fresh wind from the Ochils coming through the young hazel leaves. You may watch the trout leap in the deep brown pools, and hear the mysterious music trembling under the ceaseless ripple; no ripple of the mythical river encircling Paradise, but of a little Scottish stream forlornly beautiful, with the pathos of immemorial song. There is no silence in such shadows. Did you ever here the blackbird sing before with such a wild mastering melody? He is the thrall of his happiness. Has he drunk of some "oil of the blossom of apple," some juice of the flowers of lilies, some nectar of honey and wine? This wild clear penetrating voice that fills and overflows all the woodland, this sylvan madness, this delirium of joy—one knows no other music like the song of the blackbird in May. The water's voice is but a ripple, beneath the ripple of the leaves. Has it no songs to sing? Dunblane is hard by with the Cathedral founded by St. David, standing ruined in the village street. But the bishopric, Celtic and Culdee, has centuries of memories clustered round it before the reign of David I.

For this is the country dedicated by the Pictish king Nectan to St. Bridget; "that blessed Scotie maiden, very fair, of noble birth and of adult age, whom I baptized," says St. Patrick. The rumour of

her beauty and sanctity had charmed the Pictish Nectan as it charmed the Irish saint, who called her "one blessed Scotie maiden." And in the Pictish kingdom she charmed the people long, as you must believe when you find the number of places dedicated to her. A gentle saint you imagine her, this old St. Bridget or St. Bride, who loved much and brooded on the thoughts of her own quiet heart.

"One day Brigid was going on the Curragh of the Liffey, and when the virgin saw the beautiful shamrock-flowery plain before her, what she said in her heart was 'that if she had the ownership of the plain she would present it to the Lord of the elements.'"

It was fitting that this vale of the Allan, so tender and fertile of flowers, should have as its tutelary genius a flower-loving saint like St. Bride. One knows she was a tender spirit—one knows she was childhood's friend—childhood dashed by its petulances, its simple frowardness, its keen, swift sorrows, its pretty passions, its exquisite, grave scorns. And the singing of the gleamy water has the sweeter undertone if you remember St. Bridget who loved the children and the flowers.

For indeed, notwithstanding the glad delirium of the birds, you have tragedy enough forced upon you by this, as by every Scottish waterside. The voice of the water, never quiet, drops the minor tones through its song; the birds may forget sorrow, but a shady stream never. And the footprints of many

lives past are all too sternly left in the green places which seem made for haunts of peace.

The bishops who came after were not all such as the Culdee saints, but have left mixed legacies of good and ill; not always dew-light in the darkness, though the land they ruled was so fair.

The ruined Cathedral of Dunblane stands in the village street, with memories of a bishop famous and warlike, and a bishop famous and saint-like, with its old carved oaken stalls, and apart, by the waterside, its lonely, lovely bishop's walk with records most tender and dear. The chancel, saved from the ruins, is now the parish church.

The Cathedral, on the site of the old Culdee church, was founded by David First, in the middle of the twelfth century. In the middle of the thirteenth century it was restored by Bishop Clemens. In the following century it received for its bishop the Abbot of Inchaffray; that soldier churchman who rode by Bruce's side at Bannockburn, and confessed, on the battle eve, the kneeling army of Scotland. The abbot was made bishop in the year 1319. His late story was not a picture like his past. It was quiet, with the Allan Water winding softly round his palace gates, and the fields of the Bannockburn lying open on the fair strath, so close to the palace of Dunblane as to touch it always with its memories. Its saintly Bishop came later by some centuries, and is for many reasons much better known and remembered than the Abbot of Inchaffray. A

description which arrests the fancy is written by a modern poet, of this pale, sad recluse who wandered by the Allan Water, seeking in vain the quietness he was never to find here. Close by the waterside lies this long famous Bishop's Walk, where he mused beneath the willow trees, and prayed through those bitter years when the terrible conflict of life and death was going on in the land, with its keener issues than those of any conflict ever fought by armed men upon the strath. Leighton was made Bishop when Charles Second came back to his kingdom. He chose Dunblane for his bishopric because it was so small and poor. A good man, a gentle and devout spirit, and learned in all the learning of his time, men treasure his thoughts still; those earnest and pure thoughts, breathed here by the Allan Water, in those sad weary hours of wrestling for Scotland, hours almost of despair. He had studied in England and France, had made true friends in the churches of both nations, and the kingdom of God had grown wider to him—wide as the love of God. He could write of the Spirit of Christ as "royalty that takes away all attainders"—of learning the love of Christ as the one true commentary on the sacred Song of Songs. He implored the King again and again to spare his poor country, and protested to him that Christianity itself he could not plant in such a manner, much less one *form* of Christianity, which seemed to him, who by this quiet water drank daily so deeply of its life, a thing to be less than regarded

if the life flowed pure and strong. And all the years the Allan from its source in the braes of Ogiloy flowed through the shadows and the sunshine round the palace walls of Dunblane. And the Bishop's Walk lay by it, in the shadiest, loneliest place, as if in the dearth of sympathy he might hear the voice of God's love upon the water. It is so human a thing to go to the waters in sorrow; by the rivers of Babylon to sit and weep, to hang our harps upon the willows in the midst. Many a soul here has loved and sorrowed, and repented and resolved; and if the winding water has consoled it, that outline of castled rock has braced it anew for struggle, as it was surely meant.

For "Nature is God's art," said a wise old poet and philosopher. So we welcome the praiseful sunshine of the windy afternoon, when the branches make rhythmic music in alternate shadow and light, when the mists of the morning are gone, nor the mists of the evening gathered, but the morning splendours are a memory and the evening glories a desire.

Would we have always the May-time for the souls we love better than our own, always the rosy blossom, never the golden sheaf gathered though it be in burning noondays through hours of toil and hope? They must go on bravely, little pilgrims if they be, and tread with their tender feet the footprints made before. When they come home at eventide, shall we say they have won nothing if their dear hands are empty of all the treasures of the world?

Not so, beloved ; sings the water, be patient and faithful and brave. You shall find foam-flowers in the gorges, and subtle aromas on the moors, and the dark cloud golden-fretted, flashing secret splendours on the levellest life which imprisons your young fevered heart. For your heart makes its own heritage, and takes from all nature of its own.

O stream the beautiful ! winding on through the shadows and the sunlight, and is this the song you are singing, and have learned through the whisper of the ages ? Sing us now only psalms of peace—very low.

Ben Lomond heaves a great purple shoulder against a sky of palest gold. Stirling Rock and Abbey Craig repeat, on the green carse, the same form with more vivid outline. The carse lies beneath them like a summer sea—a soft green sea. But the deer of Glenartney no more bound across the sunny places, nor the tartans of Lennox and Argyle gleam among the hazel trees. The fields of the Bannock Burn come sisterly down to the water, fields wavy with peace and the delicate loveliness of young green corn.

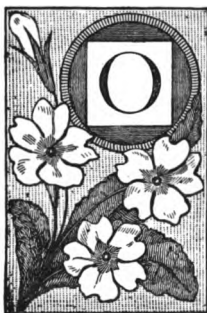
THE RIVER KELVIN.

I.

THE BISHOP'S FOREST.

"May the soul at once in a green plain
 Stop, through the spray of some sweet life-fountain,
 And cull the dew-drench'd flowering amulet."

Dante Gabriel Rossetti.



NE may sit no longer here in the lap of the old forest leaves, and let thoughts come delicately as thoughts are wont to come in leafy places. All that was is lost except the willow trees. These, with sweet, persistent beauty, weep over the winding river, and accompany it with their loveliness as far towards the heart of the city as willow trees may bud. And if one is reverent and still the silence of the summers comes back. Those whom one has loved have walked beneath the willows; their shadows are sanctified. And it seems but a little way farther off to walk with the elder spirits through the sowing of forgotten spring-times, through the fall of forgotten leaves. The new University of Glasgow, also, has crowned the river's waning beauty,

bringing with it what it might of its own old world, bringing from the ancient streets which it redeemed with its dignity, such memories as will suffer transplanting, to be, on the old forest site, instead of the vanished flowers.

But memories are not like flowers. They will not transplant so well. It is of the nature of such human things to cling tenaciously to their own habitat, however ungracious that may be. Stones of the old college may be built into the new. Not so the blessing of the mediæval bishop who sent the friar to Rome, to bring back the Pope's bull through the vineyards of Lombardy and the chestnut forests of Auvergne; not so the print of the quiet footfall of the old prebend of Luss who gave his mansion to be for the new Schools in their first extremity, and left the remnant of his right till the close of last century in reservation for himself and his heirs of a night's lodging and a horse's stall at whatever time they should demand it; not so the hush of the cloister which rose on Lord Hamilton's land, with the shady gardens of the Black Friars round, and the gardens of the Minorites near, where aves were sung on bended knees by the students for the souls of the founder and the Lady Euphemia his wife; where prayers rose at noontide and eventide through the stillness of so many gray noons. These may not be built into the walls with any bits of quaint carving, nor carried with the black stone to the river side above the willows. They will not transplant like

flowers to the Kelvin bank, from among the lost gardens where their memories once clung.

The river has lost its forest flowers and cannot yet appropriate the garden charm of the old college walks. There are still those whose fathers remember the poetry of that ancient place—the great shadow and quiet that brooded on its green turf walks, as if the spirits of the olden knight and the Lady Euphemia of Bothwell dropped perpetual dews of gratitude on the cloisters where their aves had so long been sung. The gardens were cherished much when the city had crowded round them, and the dreamfulness of the past had taken refuge there.

For the love of gardening in Scotland was as old as the early kings. David First and James First were both famous horticulturalists, and the sweet devotion to this floral art lingered down through the passionate centuries. Seventy years ago the old gardens flourished still in the city's heart, in that untranslatable charm which old gardens keep. Their favourites have long since sought refuge in cottage obscurity—the bright, irrepressible Valerian and “mournful mint,” Cowper's flowers; the bushes of lavender and the old roses called by old names, and not made into a rosery, but scattered along the green walks in the vagrancy which nature approves; the delicate, strong rosemary, with the fearlessness of love and sweetness which took possession of the borders wherever such possession was allowed; the white, pure Madonna lilies, clustered in their

legendary grace; the blue and white Canterbury bells rung mutely in the quiet noons; the great new crimson double dahlia, that triumph of the gardener's skill which sheltered, in the warm heart of its rich folded petals, the last sick honey-bee numb with October chills. For the double dahlia was new while some grace yet lingered in the college gardens, and the old-fashioned single blossom was being expelled everywhere with much contumely and neglect. Such is the fashion of flowers! Now the superb double bloom, heavy with the weight of its own beauty, those innermost recesses of loveliness which only the tiniest creatures explore—with its deeps of delicate dark and edges of pure light—it is no longer praised, scarcely any more beloved, except by the few who love flowers without account of their fashions, who do not ask if the blossom is the product of the florist's art, but having found it beautiful, believe it so to the end;—believe it so still, while the single bloom which was tended in our grandmother's youth comes back to be praised and cherished exclusively in the renaissance of flowers.

But what sweet floricultural exchanges were made in those old days when those who loved flowers travelled far for a suckling or a scion or a bulb; when to have bought a primrose would have been like buying a friend, and the gardens with their gracious traditions wandered down through the heart of the town! Among them lay the College Gardens, perhaps the

sweetest of them all, with traditions of the knight and the lady brooding silently under the flowers.

Neither those flowers nor those memories are transplanted to the Kelvin side. But where the new University now stands, the woods of Kelvin grove kept in silent depths of greenness the traditions of an earlier loveliness.

They are lost long ago—those noondays in forest gloom; those paths where the children gathered oak-apples and acorn cups; those oaks, with the records of centuries hid in their gnarled bark, which heard old-world lingering sobs and psalms, *Misereres* and *Te Deums* and soft low-voiced benedicites whispered on the edge of graves. Such poetry is there in trees, long-aged and reticent with a thousand chequered histories untold; yet insinuated everywhere in the softest melodious notes, in wordless songs of such compassion as the green leaves gather into every tender fibre where human lives have lived and passed away. Here beautiful far-visioned youth prolonged its own expectancies, and the pale reverend hands of age were crossed in the silence of the sunset—life stories begun and closed before Chaucer's tales were told. Here notable guests felt the cool of the oak-shadows, and heard the ripple of the river when Robert Second was king—when the envoys of Charles Fifth of France were going to and fro on their secret missions, negotiating with the poor little proud ancient court which so hardly held its own; when the Countess Mary of Monteith wore the high

head-dress that is kept on old brasses, and the pair of Paris gloves bought at Glasgow Fair, and paid by her vassal of Lochow yearly for the lands of Kilmun. Older than the Canterbury Tales are the Countess Mary's Paris gloves, that were bought at the summer fairs of Glasgow, as the early annals say. And the flush of chivalry was high, and the church was powerful and rich, and the bishop's summer palace in the forest must have had its own chronicle. But the leaves are inarticulate, and Lethe gathers poppies by the river always with blind eyes. History only suggests by its silence. How should it turn aside to every forest stream, and record the dreams and the braveries, the secret self-suppressions, the faithful loves, the bright duties steadfastly done—all in the silence of the shadows which no annals tell. It is not the finest souls who come to the front of story; these make mistakes so often, believe where belief is unwarrantable, and attempt where attempts are vain, and fall in silent beauty like the silent forest leaves to enrich the soil for the great trees that are to weather the centuries. Nothing is left here except the willow trees, and the fancies that bud in their shadow, as coy fancies will.

The old trees were slowly removed—one here, one there;—pathetically to those who loved them in the quiet minster shadows that stretched long and far—even to the river-side. But the willow trees remain. These whitened in forgotten springs; here their catkins cumbered the shady walk and fell on the

fisher's daughter who dreamed her love-dream beneath their shade. For the huts of the salmon fishers were but a summer walk from the willows, when the shallow water of the Clyde was ferried among its wooded cluster of islets. The huts of the salmon fishers, on the edge of the Govan beach, prepared warm tones for the sunset in their thatch and their broken timbers; and their nets were dried on the shingle, and mended beneath the thatched eaves. And the bishop's summer palace surveyed, through the leafage of its forest, the fishing boats moored in the shallows, or heard a snatch of the fisherman's songs in the twilight that silvered toil. In the long perspective of the centuries the figures of the nameless fishermen are scarcely smaller than those of the churchmen who ruled on the water-side. The forest, with two fair rivers to make quiet music to its leaves, and all the sweet mobile mystery of the green leaves' light and shade, lay, deep and still, without history, and only the names of the bishops held together, like the beads of their rosaries, on the long string of the years.

In the reign of the Bishop John Achaius, who was chaplain to David First, the summer palace was built on the banks of the river Kelvin. When one has written *John Achaius*, one has told all his story that is left. The builders built his palace on the Kelvin, while they built with slow beauty, some three miles off, the new choir of his cathedral on St. Mungo's shrine. And the forest was round the

palace, and the river stole through the forest softly down into the sunset where the huts of the fishermen lay.

The Kelvin hoarded all its loveliness to give to the bishop with his lawn. It had come down languidly in the shadow of the Campsie Fells, and gathered the creeping Luggie irresponsively into its channel, and wandered through Balmore Haughs; and taking the little Allander also into its arms, thereafter gathered interest and beauty alien to its first youth, and kept all its sweet surprises, its broken banks where the lordliest of trees hung, and flowers, the rarest of wildings, nestled round its gnarled roots, its soft bend under the willows, for its own sacred gift to the church.

The history of the river was all to begin when John Achaius came here, the chaplain of the beloved king who was to add a saint to the calendar. Here some thirty bishops in some five hundred years left such memories as may be kept in the silent archives of oaks and wych-elms and beeches and willow trees.

The bishop, in a summer solitude where the little river met the greater, lived his unwritten life beneath his own trees. And the fisher village in the sunset, with its poetry of simple toil, brought its human interests to his gates, the tenderest of all poetry. It was notable in the annals of the early kings and the cloisters which they enriched. David First, bestowing royally on the great Abbey of Kelso, includes among

his gifts "a toft in Renfrew and a ship, and a net's fishing in the river."

The huts of the salmon fishers emphasized the shingle and the sea with those mellow reds and warm browns of nets and cables and tackling and battered keels and rusted anchors, which give to a village by the sea the touches which make it charming. The huts looked across the shallow river bed with its tiny lakelets and its isles to the deeps of the bishop's pleasance which was browsed by the fallow deer. The fisher maidens knew the flowers that grew in the forest heart, and learned their sweetest learning by the river that sang beneath the willow trees. The forest and the fishery neighboured in that friendly, beautiful way which makes those vivid moral contrasts and harmonies that compose into pictures in the past.

Of the bishops' names, indeed, as must be owned, only one here and there is notable. One built the Cathedral Choir, and one the old Glasgow Bridge. There was a French bishop, Malvoisin, who reigned for two little years when William the Lion was king; and later, an English bishop, John De Cleynam, sometime one of the chaplains of a Pope Alexander. There was a soldier-bishop, Wishart, who fought in the wars of Wallace; and a soldier-bishop, Wishart, his kinsmen, who received from Edward First sixty oaks and twenty stags from the forest of Selkirk, whether for bribe or reward.

But the names for the most part read without

story attached, or even suggestion of story. The shadows of Kelvin Grove close them round in a mystery of shade. The summer palace of the bishop, with the river and the willow trees, has given all its secrets to the leaves—to the leaves and the willow trees with their lost loveliness. The bishop, who was a dreamer and not a doer, might indeed leave his life among the flowers, might hide in his breviary with pathetic memories some violet from the river side, and deem the faded thing a sweeter illumination than any border of Florentine Attavante's, with all its lovely pearls and medallions and scrolls and rosettes in brown gold.

It is so easy to become a dreamer in the shadows of green leaves. But the leaves, the willow trees, keep no record of dreams. Secrets, have they? There are always secrets in leaves if you have lived with them confidingly, giving and receiving at need. The autumn trees are Golden Registers of which no monk's art has need to give to the adorning.

In just such a glamour of greenness you dreamed your own first dream. On that willow's hoary branch that shimmers in the gray-green gloom, you first hung your harp, and believed in your own despair. To the ripple round that mossy trunk you trembled with impossible happiness. On that imperturbable current your first impatient joy floated into the beautiful—floated into the unknown. Here you have whispered confidences which you feared the blackbird might betray. In this water you have cooled your

hand fevered with youth's love and fear. Between those twisted hawthorn boughs was the tremor of the evening star, first answered with responsive tremors as your heart awoke to its destiny. Here you followed the water-course under the black poplars, and gathered the red catkins and the last year's skeleton leaves—nature's beautiful debris—to the song of the first lark, and your own inward song, the wilder, gladder of the two.

You come back to them silently. Here are still a few green leaves, and the patient perpetual "willow-wood" brooding over the slow stream. You read the leaves like an old letter, and find their premonitions fulfilled. Not as you dreamed then. Always otherwise. Yet some string vibrated to every hope; some chord was struck for every despair. You look no longer for impassioned sweetnesses, nor tremble for infinitudes of pain. You tread with less confidence, and yet with less fear. You find by the river side an old letter written, wisely and sweetly, in the green leaves. The things which are holy and true you fold away and keep sacred, hiding your intuitions, your divinest thoughts, in the sacraments of the stars and the flowers, and the storm and the sunshine and the dew drops and all beautiful familiar things. You also are still a dreamer under the willow trees.

Those beautiful gifts of nature, the *Penseroso* of the forest—you love them sympathetically as you love the touch of a friend. Their catkins, golden

and silver gray, are the "palms" of the little children, who still unconsciously keep, where palms and olives are not and symbol and procession have so long been disallowed, this mediæval relic in a name of the prophetic spring. They had still the glory of a symbol in those old silent years when the first saplings budded along the water-side; when the bishops who lived in the shadows with no story round their name—had yet round them the dear poetry of the river and the willow trees.

Gilpin, indeed, who loved trees, disclaims the poetry of willows, and passes them briefly by as "mostly inconsiderable," a verdict one should resent from any other pen. But this umpire, who knew the trees intimately as his own thoughts, did not live in their life, scarcely knew their poetry. Gilpin's essays in poetry correspond with Cowper's in art. The one writes poetry as an artist; the other makes pictures as a poet. Where Cowper lived, Gilpin criticised. He has not the abandon of a poet, but is an artist eminently. He has the keenest eye for the right balance of branches; a most loving judgment of trees which he finds in perpetual error. The hawthorn is badly shaped and wasteful of its bloom; the chestnut heavy in leaf and inharmonious in flower. Having praised the trunk of the beech he can praise no other part; the bramble is to the eye wholly disagreeable. In company with such judgments, we, who love willow trees, can accept his unpraiseful verdict on these without supreme

disquiet; yet secretly wonder how the rural vicar who loved his trees so well, never won the love which "thinketh no evil" of them. And we wander through his charming pages, and keep our own loves in our hearts.

We have "the sweet singer of Israel" and our Shakspeare and all the poets to vindicate our love for the old willow trees. That they "weep little drops of water which stand like fallen tears upon their leaves," is their sylvan appeal for tenderness which only a few souls refuse; and surely not the old bishops who lived with them here in silence.

The willows rose indeed on the vestiges of earlier trees. The pitiful fate of the forests which the English axes felled made a page of minor tragedy in the long wild tragic years. The old trees of the Celts were thinned by all the watersides when James Fourth attempted by a royal decree to repair the sylvan devastation, enacting "that every lord or laird should plant at least one acre of wood where there was already no great wood or forest."

For the trees which were rest and loveliness, were also riches and strength. The shadows, the sweet places which made covert for birds and flowers, meant something in the land's history quite apart from the interest of the merle and the anemone, or even of the fallow deer and the little children's love.

It was a century earlier when the forest schools of France arose, and still another century when a statesman's alarm, "France shall perish for want of

wood," brought a Bourbon king's ordinance to save the unripe oaks. But of its oak forests Scotland was already spoiled by violence, not by slow wasting, when James Fourth issued his decree.

Response to the king's mandate was made in the saplings of oak ; in the dark lines of alder trees that crept along water-courses, in the fragrant bloom of the lindens—the blossom which Ariel loved ; in the beech-trees which deepened their shadows year by year, and made soil for the oak fern ; in the lovely airy birch with its trunk of silver and richest brown, and the tremor of its sweet leaves and the gold of its autumn time. Response was made in the pensive willows that cooled their roots in the stream. Response was made in the wild fruit trees, and their splendour of summer snow ; in the lovely bird-cherry which loves a steep for its home—the *gean* of the child wayfarer, the fruit of temptation and desire, so delicious to taste and sight, that the forester of most discretion would fain omit it from his sylvia, lest child feet should make a track to reach it through his tenderest saplings. It is like the treasure in the house which makes the house unsafe.

Yet the old *gean* trees lingered long on the site of the Bishop's Forest. Who knows by whom they were planted, by what gentle recluse who loved the floating of their white petals in the early summer wind, and could forgive the little children who loved them as well as he? You who have familiars in *gean* trees know their plentitude of purity and peace.

What a soft unworldly touch have their summer snow-flakes on your hand! How mysteriously silent they are floating in the flush of the forest—in the first breezes of the summer, when the nestlings try their wings! Little lovers will penetrate the green leaves' sanctuary to gather the fallen flecks. In autumn they will come to gather the leaves—crimson as the petals of flowers—and to taste the stolen sweetness of the wild, beautiful fruit.

And the bishop—they will love him the more if he suffer their happy trespass. The child's blessing on the bishop will reward the bishop's blessing on the child. And the river under the willows, flowing down to the islets at its close, will leave the tender benison in the shadows it whispers through.

In autumn the noise of rooks subdues the ripple of the river—the cawing in the windy trees through the drop of sere leaves. Yet, James First, who “tamed the Borders,” made a royal raid on rooks, “considering that rooks building in churchyards, orchards, or trees, do great skaith upon corn.” So the king ordained that all owning orchard or forest should suffer the parent birds to build and disturb them in no wise. But before the fledglings had flown—while the bloom was unfallen in the orchards, and the black buds were yet on the ash—birds and nests should be destroyed without lingering or ruth. “And where it is known they have built, and the birds are flown, and the nests found in the trees at Beltane, the trees shall be forfeited to the king.”

The visionary bishop who learned from his own rookery a world of mellow thoughts and pleasures for the late years, might resent this forest edict as the men of Yarrowdale resented edicts of another sort. Till late years there was still a rookery in a shady bend of the river where the old forest lay. Perhaps it yet is there with the birds cawing to each other as in the noons of old.

The weird black rooks among the branches may hold their own down through the ages; not so the bishops, nor the depths of their forest green. But it is through the felled trees the sunny vistas are opened. The promise of the beautiful future is held in the hand of the past. And the riverside is still the dearer for the leafage of the lost forest.

BY THE KELVIN.

II.

A MEMORIAL OF FLOWERS.



O know the secret of herbs" is not life's one duty. Even "he who goes among the perfumes" may go with a heart unquiet. But there is a certain healing virtue among the green things of earth, which the old leeches did not misname nor misuse. And the haunts in the bend of the river which the buds flushed in early springs, keep a pensive after-grace when the flowers are forgotten things. For the flowers, like the forest, are lost: there remain only the willow trees. The flowers are lost from the bend which was once the loveliest reach of the stream.

Yet there still are those who remember when it was a dreamland of flowers; when sweet things shy elsewhere were wet by the Kelvin water—things that were dainty and coy and refused a home by other northern streams, yet hid with delight in the shadow of the old forest trees, and listened anew

every springtime to the song beneath the willows. Here the Arum, the Cuckoo-Pint, so rich in mediæval use—so rare a wilding in Scotland, showed its blotched leaves and crimson spikes. The beautiful bold bright berries, crowded and coral-red, lingering luminous long among the faded leaves of English woods, grew by the Kelvin like a wayward stranger in the quaint manner of flowers. All things in nature have their "ways," which we love distinctly from their beauty—which we love and inwardly praise like the idiosyncrasies of those that are dear to our lives. The Arum is curious, and always a delight of its own, yet without beauty save the bold bright berries, the "lords and ladies" of the children who play round the peasant's knee. Those crimson berries are long defunct along the Kelvinside; they are now only historical—a tradition like some goodlier things. Here also you might love the blue sweet violet, and gather it among its leaves. It too is a stranger in the north—the fragrant coy thing. But it made a home among the mosses and the oak-ferns in the forest glade, a soft surprise of loveliness in bewildering depths of flowers.

Here the shimmer of cold pure water lit beds of marsh-marigold, and stitchworts and sweet woodruff starred together the raspberry thickets. Here water-lilies floated on their broad leaves in the green tremulous reflections of the knarry trees above—that supreme flower which only loves lovely places, whose vocation seems to be to make foregrounds for

the painter, and fill pauses in the poet's verse; yet from which we never turn with weariness, nor say "it is enough," but always come to it with the sweet wonder of little children's love. To gather water-lilies in the old mill dam, where the Kelvin nears its close, was a pleasure unforgotten not many years ago. Little and tender studies these, with the water flowing through the woodland, and the white flower uplifted to receive the sunshine in its chalice. And always the sweet dear old song of the river answering the song of the leaves.

But the Kelvin in the flush of its beauty won no painter's love. There were none to paint its lilies or the gleam of its forest dark as M. Diaz painted Fountainebleau, as Mr Aumonier paints the lovely reaches of the Thames. Its loveliness had vanished before the landscape painters came. The flowers were yet pretty follies to the artist, or a sort of visible poetry—things made lovely without use even on the loveliest canvas. Gilpin finds it necessary to warn the painter lest he should be seduced by their seeming beautiful humilities. "The fern or dock perhaps he may condescend to imitate," but if he wishes his foreground enlivened with the colours offered by the flowers, "he will judiciously give the tint he wants in a few random general touches."

Ferns and docks perhaps;—there was already precedent for such large-leaved foregrounds among the Dutch painters. But the age of the Pre-Raphaelites was not yet. The delicate secrets of

green places, their infinitudes of tender hue, none had cared to penetrate, or note with responsive eye. So the turquoise of wet forget-me-not must gleam ungathered by the Kelvin; and the spikes of crimson berries and the rare cuckoo-pint must die unrecorded beneath the willow trees. The stones, crusted by no monastic legend, through which the bright water played, clad themselves in mosses green and gray, unprotrayed except in the water which gave back the still harmony.

A painter named William Cochrane was born near the riverside, and perhaps loved the slighted flowers as a true painter must. But what should a great artist do with those simple home loves! He was sent to Rome by his patrons, who were persuaded that "he will be a great history painter of a rank to do honour to his benefactors and his country."

There he saw new worlds of loveliness, but looked on them from far. He could not match old Bellini, nor hold a pencil after Raphael. He could not paint history. Might he not have painted a flower, and left behind him memories of the river that wound through the forest at home?

This were unthought of frivolity. But he followed the foot-prints of George Jameson, who painted Charles First, and did his best to atone to his patrons for producing no work of fame. His life was full of labour of the kind that was sought and desired. He had no time to linger by the Kelvin and paint the

water-lilies there. He himself might have been well content with the praise of a Little Master, and lived happy noons with brush and palette among the useless flowers; chronicling from year to year the river's loveliness, as other painters have done for many sober and sweet rivers whose reeds and whose water-lilies are their whole fortune of beauty. But the austerity of circumstances denied the Clydesdale painter a fate so calm as this. How could the summer daisies fulfil any great ambitions? or even the wild roses to be gathered by the riverside? So the sweet flowers must die, and none to record their praise.

By the riverside was a well deep and pure. As the flowers were without a painter, the well was without a saint—a somewhat notable omission in this haunt of shadow and silence. The Hebrews had sung their psalms of faith round the wells of Baca in the wilderness; the Greeks had offered to their fountains a whole anthology. Must not the Christian faith, with its late tender aggressions, its lofty battle cries through all the known world—cull from Greek and Hebrew the supreme of loveliness and truth?

So it took the heart of the waters as it took the people's heart. There was scarcely a secret fountain in shady place of alder or hazel or willow, but was mystically brooded over by some saint improvised in its need. Many were the wells of St. Mary over weary Christendom. A few still glimmer

in memorial greenness of leaves—over them a fragment of Old English with the smooth ivy leaves hiding the long lancets; the deep meadow grass disputing the place of the mouldering sedilia; and the old stone basin filled with the moss, the fallen leaves, the forget-me-nots, or the cold wet cresses which the village maidens gather round the traditionary shrines. A thousand sweet early sanctities are hid among the ripples and the flowers, silently enfolded in them as the flowers in the glory of the young morning for which they have neither toiled nor spun. And the trickle of the tiny brooklet over the wet stones is solemn and sweet with the old eternal litany that once was whispered here.

The Hebrew Psalms beside the wells—Pindar's Odes made by the fountain of Dirce—always the beautiful springs welling up through the loveliest secrets of lives; some sweet, mysterious human instinct took its sorrows to the quiet sources of the waters that wander to the sea. So the Christian Fathers with a wise tenderness made sacraments of the shady places. The wells were in haste appropriated each by its tutelary saint. It was not to be conceived nor suffered that a fount of emotion so divine, where the tender reflections of so many lives were lost and gathered again, where the low reverberations of a thousand delicate voices, in love and resolve and penitence and faith sounded through the dropping of the spring, should be left

unblessed by those mediæval saints who filled the vacant places of the genii of the Greek streams.

The sacred wells abound in the see of St. Kentigern. There was St. Mungo's Well and the Lady Well, the Priests' Well and the Friars' Well; above all there was the Well of St. Taneu, "the beloved Taneu, mother of the blessed Confessor Kentigern," as she is fondly called in the old monastic records. To this "beloved Taneu" a little chapel was built beside the sacred well which was dark with a great shadow of trees. The water had gifts of healing, and many pilgrims came from far and rested in the green coolness by the well of the beloved mother. Here she was laid to rest among her own green leaves. The Glasgow church of St. Enoch is built where her grave lies.

The well on the banks of the Kelvin was never a consecrated spring. In such shadows they might meetly have built some little chantry for souls. The water was deep and cold, and the ash-trees, which love water and high places to cling, established an old foothold on the rock which overhangs the well. A plane tree mixed its leaves with the ash-trees—faithful to the loves of its kind—true to pure waters since Menelaus planted it with his own hand beside the Arcadian fountain. But before the ash and the plane some immemorial wild pear-tree had whitened over the water and given the well its name—a name which no saint ever superseded by his own.

“Where speech ends music begins,” but there is no music in wells. Even music has ended in those deep, silent culminations of beautiful things. This well beside the river has been long forlorn of beauty, but it once was a home of loveliness and the haunt of earliest spring. Here wild songs were heard; here blossoms were transmuted to thoughts; here were divined and accepted all the beautiful myths of flowers.

THE EDEN.

"Yon wealthy stream
 Dreaming among green fields its summer dream,
 Which takes whate'er the gracious hours will bring
 Into its quiet bosom."



O love the Eden, it is necessary you should love streams for themselves, being not curious of them, but always fond. It is necessary the water should please you as water itself, simply because it is a stream and has a perpetual song. You must love its ripples as a painter loves them, its broad cool weeds and their tremulous reflections, idealized by dreams and study and the persistant needs of his art. You must love it as the Theban flutist loved the reeds in the reed-beds of Cephissus, for the slumbering of possible divine music in the ungathered lyres. You must love it as old Sir Thomas Brown loved his first intimates of flowers, when he "did but know one hundred, and had scarcely ever simplified further than Cheapside." That is, you must love it with a love that is apart from beauty; it must create for you some separate

interest, because it is a river with a song. For the wheat and the oats it has watered, you must love it—for the barley in its golden *briere*, for the sweet yearly *expectancy* which Coleridge says is finer than *surprise*.

The vale is called “gardenesque.” This is its limit of praise. Not exuberant of charms; not fertile of thought; a quiet place with expansions, vistas conveniently far, eminently a green land, and that is all. As life, by its own complexities, is toned to stiller sweetness, we recognise, with more assured grace, the royal prerogative of choice. We even perceive how this slow gentle water may satisfy a certain desire. There are all moods and temperaments and all landscapes to yield them response.

The lands which lie between the Firth of Tay and Forth are not lands for a picture. A transcription of Fife stream or meadow—without large aid of poetry and sentiment brought to it from the painter’s thought—is not likely to make you in love with either the landscape or the art. You turn from that level greenness which wearies a quiet soul. The How of Fife pastures the kine; the Eden water quenches their thirst. Thus they fulfil their destiny; nature asks of them no more. For it is but a homely landscape; sweet only with that work-a-day sweetness—the grace of common lives.

There is here no dream-light with its long suggestive calm; no impromptu of changeful colour winding like a sweet vagary through the tones and

semitones of the heart, no palor which falls from some wandering cloud caught in the meshes of the mountains—inexplicable, meaning nothing, for that reason meaning all. It is a landscape in prose, having but transient moments of poetry, as the homeliest lives have in love or sorrow, or disappointment.

In May time, certainly all the land is a poem. But indeed, when that time of the singing of birds has come, no drowsiest of landscapes refuses a responsive smile. Queen Guenevere "would ride on Maying to the woods and fields near Westminster," and commanded her knights and ladies to be "well horsed and all clothed in green. And they rode on Maying in woods and meadows, as it pleased them, in great joy and delights." On which the old chronicler exhorts his readers, "All ye that be lovers call unto your remembrance the month of May, like as did Queen Guenevere." "Like as May month flowereth and flourisheth in many gardens, so in likewise let every man of worship flourish his heart in this world, first unto God, and next unto those that he promised his faith unto."

And the vale of the Eden has no churlish face, but fairly responds to the May time as the heart and the flowers respond. When the fall of the cherry blossom makes the first snow-in-summer, when the lilies of the valley betray themselves in hidden places, when the hawthorn flushes or pales the hedgerows—then the "statuary" of the landscape is nothing, the colour, the perfume is all.

And the river, the Eden water has itself the grace of all streams—nay, is gracious more than the wont of Scottish streams to the low green pastures it caresses. It was in the early times a sort of Northern Nile in miniature, and bountifully flooded its banks and left them truly gardens. It floods them no more. But the banks have a reminiscence, and bud into such efflorescence as pastures with memories should. Here you will find a rare sedge—the *carex extenso*—not much to boast for meadows once flooded by the river of Eden, but botanically notable to those curious in grass and reeds.

Then there are the common flowers, gentle, beloved things—our lady's mantle with its broad spaces for light and child-thoughts—its mediæval suggestions to those who love such—its suggestions of the child-innocence and the child-carelessness for all. Here are violets blue and deep with the thoughts of all the years, or sunny as if with the glory of the first sunbeams from God. Here are

“daffodils

That come before the swallow dares, and take
The winds of March with beauty.”

And always beyond is the quiet distance, the pearl and silver setting of the north, and the water still enough to give back without wrinkle or dimple every blade of bended grass, every flowered sedge or tendril of birch—so slowly, with such faint motion, it wanders to the sea.

The landscape if not lovely is sweet and real and quiet. It is full of that healthful common-place which fills the largest part of our lives, and has the peculiar interest of the people who are definitely common-place. It is that sort of "no-man's-land" of being without any special attribute.

To compensate for such negative beauty it is rich in distinction of another sort. If a name is a talisman here in Stratheden you shall find interests enough. It is full of footprints turned aside, not in the route of history, but with vivid curious suggestions of things of long ago. There are the Fifeman and the Danish rover on the edge of Largo Bay, and the Falkland *scrapie* who plundered the harvest fields, and grazed his one horse on the Lomond. There are charters to the Ranger of the Lomonds and Stewart of the Stewarty of Fife traditions of the Rose Loch with its islets which are now mossy knolls in the How, and of the great oak forest which till Cromwell's time leafed and faded in peace. "This year" (which was the year 1652) "the English began to cut down Falkland wood. The most part of the trees were oak."

This wood was a favourite retreat of the Stuart kings and queens. Lindesay of Pitscottie tells how in 1527 the king and Queen dowager were Christmas guests of the Archbishop of St. Andrews. And "the king tarried there a while quiet, and used hunting and hawking upon the water of Eden."

So the fields which now lie in such inevitable

prose, without distinction or distraction, only bright with buttercups to sate the dainty taste of kine—were once a royal forest where was heard the “bell of the wild buck.” For thus the cry of the deer was poetized in the king’s chase—a soft abbreviation of bellow, which suited not so stately a creature.

In this wood, Queen Mary also spent many early days hunting and hawking by the water of Eden, as her grandfather had done forty years before. Her first spring visit was made in the year 1562, when the relaxations of her afternoons, it is recorded, were Greek, Latin, Music, and Chess, but the business of the morning was “hunting by the water of Eden.”

And the stately page of old history floats down the waterside with that fine flavour of chivalry whose age was already past. Flaws enough had that chivalry which whoever will may indicate, but its lofty, gracious influence, may well be tenderly kept in the heart of the peoples to whom it was left, a traditionary heritage. It is needed—that proud, ennobling touch, which will keep truth, honour, courtesy, obedience—the knightly virtues still—as imperiously necessary to practise, as absolutely impossible to renounce as when the ideal knight received the consecrating accolade, and rode out to make war on all wrong. Its proud, impossible ideals are the uses of the memory of chivalry: its consecration of all work and pleasure, sometimes grotesque consecration, yet always beneath the grotesque fact, the suggestion of the beautiful imagining. St.

Hubert, who, hunting in the forest, saw a luminous, miraculous cross between the horns of the stag, and straightly retired to the cloister, and thereafter became Bishop of Liege, and in after years was canonised, and had his feast celebrated four times in the year, and an order of knights created of his name, —whose insignia was a chain of hunting-horns suspending a likeness of their patron in the act of doing homage to his vision—is a typical mediæval figure to be smiled at and parodied if you will—but with grace beneath its absurdities—the grace of worship and enthusiasm.

There were endless legends over Europe giving honour to the sylvan chase, and enhancing the glories of the deep greenery by the sound of the hunting-horn. But France, with its gay chivalry, peculiarly appropriated these, and especially appropriated falconry, and endowed it with honours of state. Mary brought her passion with her, and exercised it here in Fife with what attendant splendour she could bring to the twilight of the Scotch woods. "Hawking by the water of Eden" was a pastime still more favourite than the chase, in the brief troubled years while Mary yet reigned. Many times by the water of Eden was the royal falcon flown. The Queen rode forth with her hunting-bird on her gold embroidered glove, and the tinkling of the tiny bells sounded clear through the silvery noon; some trembling, frightened nestling was warned in the Eden's mirror, and the hawk

came back to its perch lured by the sweet French tones—these are little reminiscent glimpses to relieve the river's monotone.

Stratheden was a peaceful refuge from the Queen's distractions in her capital. The forest glades on the Eden water were supremely quiet places. An old historian's eulogy of the authority of James Fifth, is significant of their repose. "He had ten thousand sheep going in Ettrick Forest in keeping by Andro Bell, who made the king as good count of them as they had gone in the bounds of Fife." So the Eden flowed always through the land with a cheerful serene duty, an eminent example to the country of the Yarrow, where Andrew Bell kept the king's sheep. The meadows on the Eden were quiet places, peaceful nooks, apart, safe from Border and Highland warfare. Incursions of Danes there had been, the sea-kings leaving behind them traces in names and otherwise—such pretty perversities of names as are only found in Fife. But these lay already far away in history, when the courtly trains of Queen Mary came trooping through the shadows by the waterside—the languid water which rose among the green Ochils and slid with such a sleepy motion through its rich level strath.

The stream will meet the German ocean, and the fair little city of St. Andrews, gather into its ancient lap a world of distinct story—not of ballad music to ring over the sands with the waves, and break upon the high sea-tower that keeps its superannuated

vigil on the waters of the Scandinavian erls. It is not musical of ballads. All its rhythm is the rhythm of the waves. But it has an old-world scholarship which it holds with a fine reticence. And the fair, ancient little city, gives a certain tone to "the kingdom," and sheds back upon the water some chaste scholastic grace.

For, indeed, the city of St. Andrews has a whole world of history in it. It is a small piece of stately antiquity not to be modernised by any new fashion or revival, any nineteenth century renaissance. The fame of its ancient university, of its bishops, and its archbishops, its profuse fragments of monastic architecture, its quaint, old dwelling-houses, its always near sound of the sea—these give it a unique charm among small antique towns. The ruins of the Black Friar's Chapel is a study of ivy in the High Street. The castle overhangs the waves, its sea tower of dark fame being slowly undermined by the winter storms of six centuries. The remains of a hospital for pilgrims recall the days when the votaries of St. Andrew crowded to his shrine by the sea. The chapel and tower of St. Regulus stand a relic of the first Culdees, and of that old king, Constantine Third, whom they drew to their midst by their fame. The broken pillars of the Cathedral make a vista to the German Ocean—long desolate, detached remains of a mediæval beauty, "every man having carried away the stones who imagined he had need of them."

On the low, marshy ground between the Eden and St. Mary's Burn, the thanes of Fife built their castle, one knows not how long ago. No trace of this castle remains, but only gleams of tradition which light up with momentary flashes the sober water and its banks. Interspersed with these, in milder tradition than those of "stone and lime," are stories of knowes and trees that have gathered history in their greenness. There is the story of the Bogrian Knowe, where the Archbishop Beaton was found by his enemies, keeping sheep, disguised as a shepherd; the story of the aged sycamore, which stood by the Abbey gate, maligned by Jonson as the only tree he found in Fife older than himself.

In what a far past lay the Christmas of King James, who lingered long to hunt in the forest by the water of Eden, amidst the soft, pearly shadows of the early winter noon. The delicate grays of fretted branches, the blues of the landscape far away—thrown back by the trunks of slender birches, red or silver or gold, made always definite features in the white bewildering snow. From the thatch on the peasant's roof the snow would melt in the noontide; from the sunny side of the river where the first snow-drops blow. And through the mysterious forest light, the flood of wintry gold and silver, the bugle-horn of the king would be wound among the windings of the river. The people on the edge of the forest would hear the merriment—the woodmen, the ploughmen, the shepherds who lent their roof-thatch

for the daisies and the first melting of the snows. But the forest is lost, dismantled like the little city of the Saint.

For the spoilers of the royal forest did not spare the city by the sea. Edward First stripped the lead from the roof of the Augustinian convent to batter the Castle of Stirling. Murray of Bothwell and the Earls of March and Fife destroyed the Castle of St. Andrews to save it from Edward Third. The sea did the work of war to St. Mary's Church-on-the Rock.

In the long list of the bishops there is the same fatality. Yet the early history of its church is beautiful as with sunrise on it. In all the legends of the Culdees there is a certain germ of grace contrasting in curious sweetness with those materialistic absurdities which other lands and ages adopted into their calendar. A possible vitality lurks in the stories which make largest demands on credulity. It is as when the soul, retired in an inward sanctuary of dreams, thinks apart, having left its material companion without, so that there is no witness to bring back to the waking world any true rehearsal of its secret, silent visions.

As early as the seventh century, Cainneh, the friend of St. Columba, founded a monastery almost close to the banks of the Eden where it flows into the German sea. Then there follows St. Serf with his miraculous history. St. Servanus he is called because he served God day and night. His long

studies in Alexandria; his thirty years sojourn in Canaan, his sailing through the seas in obedience to divine command, westward and northward till he came to the river Forth; his wanderings by the Eden Water and over the adjacent land, teaching and praying and healing in the fervour of his soul; then his honourable burial in Fife, "with psalms and hymns and canticles;"—all is told tenderly by the Abbot Adamnan, his friend.

In the same century in which St. Serf died, St. Regulus comes into the vale of Eden, bearing the relics of St. Andrew to the riverside by the sea. The saint came to the place with the relics of St. Andrew on his head, his followers chanting hymns along the Eden Water, and the Pictish king, Hungus, meekly following on foot. The Pictish king, Hungus, that day gave the country of Fife "to God and St. Andrew his apostle, with waters, meadows, fields, pastures, and woods, as a gift for ever." Then St. Regulus, on the sea-shore, chanted the Allelujah to God, and prayed that He might bless the place and keep it in His love for ever. And King Hungus took a turf in presence of the Pictish nobles, and laid it on the Altar of St. Andrew, confirming his gift thus.

The first bishop of the place was Cellach, who took a solemn vow at Scone to defend the Christian faith and keep it pure. King Constantine Third heard the vow. He was with the bishop at Scone,

and himself at some later year left his kingdom to go on pilgrimage.

This was early in the tenth century, and the story of the Eden had begun. Also the stormy story of the little city on the shore. Bishop Adrian was slain by the Danes; Bishop Stewart fell on Flodden Field. Not even the records of the Cathedral are any records of peace. And the Pictish king's gift, and the saint's blessing by the sea, recede far away in the shadows and the silence of precious things lost. Yet not lost wholly, while true and gracious lives are lived in the same sunlight, are brightened by the same faith.

And the sea-shore has always the dear charm of perpetuity. The waves from the German Ocean broke and curled on the sands in the days of Constantine, and the waves of birds of passage broke on the Eden woods. In the late autumn they came to their island retreat; then as now, the larks and the gold-crests and the wood-cocks on their own willing wings, or the storm-petrels blown ashore when the winds were wildest on the sea. The old Culdee saints, who were tender of helpless creatures, and made friends, it is said, of every living thing, must have known well the birds which came wearily in, after voyaging through mist and storm, and wintered in the leafless trees along the Eden water.

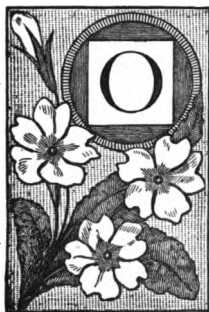
So this water, as you must own, needs no peculiar beauty, nor any song to float it into fame, but the real history lived on its banks. You may be well

content to love it simply as a stream ; its ripples, its reeds, its common wild flowers, and ask of it nothing more. Its yearly expectancies of bud ; its harvests under full moon ; its common level prose of landscape ; these you accept with love, for its poetry was written long ago.

THE LOGAN BURN.

"How clattering antlers crest yon lofty rock !
Nay, 'twas a dream of olden centuries born."

—*Thomas Agar Holland.*



N the banks of the North Esk stands the famous little chapel of Rosslyn, a chiselled fantasy looking down the long slope of green. Glen and river banks are all summer—a wilderness of bloom. The interior of the chapel is the flora repeated in stone, with the human touch which could not be wanted in the faces that look from the flowers. The chapel was not meant to be a chapel, but erected for a Collegiate Church with provost, prebends and choristers. It was designed to be more beautiful than anything within the four seas. No cost of gold or labour or research was spared. William St. Clair, Earl of Rosslyn, sent his emissaries over Europe to seek far and near the loveliest models to be found.

The great artists were to come. Michael Angelo was not yet—nor Raphael nor Leonardo. But Pisano was in Verona painting and graving medals ;

and Pollajualo was in Florence in his first youth, a famous sculptor in bronze; Pessellino was also there with his grandfather Pessello; and Antonio Vivarini was in Venice in the midst of his busiest years. There was no lack of beautiful designs to be gleaned from sunnier lands, and the enthusiasm of the Earl of Rosslyn was supported by a princely wealth.

He died before his work was finished. As he left it, it remains—a nave without choir or transepts, a beautiful promise unfulfilled;—that pathetic thing which comes to so many lives, yet leaves perhaps the holier suggestions of patience, of onlook, of hope.

On the floor of the chapel lies the graven figure of the knight—his hands clasped in prayer—his feet on a slain deer. The knight and the slain deer are the motive of the sacred edifice, for the chapel was a thank offering for a summer day's chase. This old St. Clair, who seems to have been a sort of Nimrod in the forest, made a haughty vaunt, says the story, that he would forfeit his life to the king, if on a certain day he failed to bring down a stag from Roslin before it crossed the Logan Burn.

The Logan Burn rises on the Pentlands, and winds, when it leaves its mountain bed, through a rich wooded land to the Esk.

Bruce accepted the challenge, and rode out from Holyrood through the summer morning—round him most of the barons who had fought at Bannockburn. The battle was but a month old. There were Douglas, Randolph, and the Stewart gathered round

him on the Pentland Hills overlooking the Logan Burn. St. Clair had already dismounted and offered his life to the king, when the stag was brought to bay as its feet touched the boundary water. So the life nearly forfeited was saved, and the whole range of the Pentland Hills gifted by the king to the knight.

As a thanksgiving, he built Rosslyn Chapel on the banks of the North Esk. But close to the edge of the Logan Burn, at the spot where the stag was slain, he built also a little chapel which he dedicated to his tutelary St. Catherine.

The chapel was endowed with Logan House, Kirkton and Eastside—three green lovely farms which lie still among the hills. The ruins of the little chapel, by the lonely Logan Burn, were demolished eighty years ago, to rebuild the dykes of the farm on which it stood. Beneath the altar the workmen came upon an urn, which on breaking open they discovered to be full of gold and silver coins. The last vestiges of St. Catherine's are now covered by a loch, into which the Logan Burn widens here among the hills. But on a rare summer, when the water is very low, you may still see the ripples breaking over a few stones—the only remains of the little chapel memorial of Bruce and St. Clair.

On the other side of the Pentlands, St. Clair built a monastery and two hospitals. Where the hospitals stood are now two pastoral farms, with a lingering relic of the old benefaction in the names of Easter

and Wester Spittals. Within a few years there existed a condition in the lease of one of the farms that clean straw and a comfortable outhouse should be in nightly readiness for any wayfarer who came. The wanderer straining through the snow to the rude shelter on the hill, did not know that he owed it to the famous chase on that far-off summer day—to a knight's vaunt and a king's gift in the years of early story.

The Logan Burn, passing St. Katherine's, flows downward to the Esk through a rich landscape, familiar in stormy annals. Now the smoke is curling from the cottages where none dare make afraid, and the lazy kine rest in their own shadows, and the green corn comes up in the furrows of the early battle fields. The bees from the cottage gardens rifle the old-fashioned flowers. In August there is holiday time. "The bees are at the heather." When the purple bell comes out, the hives are carried to the hills—to Habbie's Howe, a hollow of the Pentlands which the Logan Burn has cleft. The water comes over the rock among tufts of golden saxifrage. You may gather white heather somewhere higher on the hills;—not too far to climb, nor too far for winged things to float. Close round you is the purple bloom for the sweet delectation of the bees, and your own drowsy content. You think of the old Egyptians—slow eyes searching for the white lily, for the lotus, for the rose—floating down the Nile in their bee-hive laden boats, on their quest

for the honey of flowers. They have their river, and you have yours. You are infinitely content, as the bees are also, with your Logan Burn for your Nile. A thousand sweet half-forgotten affinities are revived in the heather on its rocks. What you deemed petrifications of love are suddenly vivid emotions stirred to life by the singing of the water beneath the little lynn. Some small tender fancy which shall afterwards become a thought, which shall comfort you, the wayfarer, which shall be a lark's song in the gray—has its first suggestion in the purple shadows which environ the water and the bees.

The hive-bees and the wild-bees dispute the Logan side. You are conscious of predilections which are all for the humble bee. You imagine its heavier boom means a kindlier intent; you imagine it would, with more genial will, yield the honey its kindred hive. The honey-bees will go back to the cottage gardens by the Esk; where will the wild bees hide when the Logan is swollen with snow? And you learn with a tender approval of the compensations of the earth, that only the humble bee can reach the honey in the common sweet red-clover—that this is a nectar peculiarly reserved for the wild wandering wing.

For the humble bee was your friend in your first memories of flowers, and you do not easily divest yourself of your first friendships or follies. And the hive-bees have the heather and the gorse and the

harebells and the yellow mountain violets. When the heather has faded they will be carried back to the Esk, to their homes in the cottage gardens;—carried back past the chapel of St. Catherine's, by the way the stag came and the royal hunting-train in the days when Bruce was king.

And the Logan Burn, hid among the Pentlands, will sing on through its own green grass, and the lochs into which it widens will repeat all the greenness of the hills. And the yellow mountain violets will blow on the Camp Knowe, and the wild thyme on the Whiney Knowe, and the golden gorse everywhere. The green gares of Castlelow are still with the stillness of hills. The Logan Burn lies beneath; on the other side Rullion Green, where a covenanters' army was defeated in the winter sunset. You may follow, through the Currie moor, the track of the royalist army; how lonely and forgetful is the long moorland grass! And the green gares of Castlelow are still with the stillness of hills. You hear the nibbling of the sheep. That is all. But if you climb to the *weather-gleam*, you discern the far-off sea. Between you and it the rich woods and meadows, and the warm farm-steads and the embowered mansions, and the villages along the Esk. These villages are not beautiful. Do not look here for rich old barge-boards, dormer-windows hung among the leaves, low sweet trellised porches which invite the tendrils of flowers. The villages, nearly all, are uncomely, utterly and hopelessly. One

may love them, yet all the same protest they are not lovely, and turn with more conscious approval to the water which doubles among the near fields.

It has been the fate of this water of North Esk to be written of many times. Not because of its music as the Yarrow and the Clyde; but because it lies conveniently where strangers are wont to go, and has shared history with the capital, and has its own loveliness withal. The Dutch painters judged they could create no landscape, however rich in colour or line, but required the *raison d'être* of human story in it. The genius of this river has emphasized the fiat of the painters, and by some mysterious affinity of nature and human nature, has made all its course memorial—a suggestion of things apart from streams. Its own beauty is forgotten in the lives it has touched and consoled, in the interstices of history it has threaded, in the names which crowd its woods. It is darkened by the mills on its banks, yet it keeps its storied way sweetly, meeting loss, like a brave bright soul, among its thinning beechwoods, and its constant violets. It wanders by Auchindenny, where a fragment of old Woodhouselee lingers like a line of a forgotten song, which vexes memory with its music. There is a ghost story here—a haunted river-side. Superstitions linger long in deep glens that have shadows to comfort them, and singing water to subdue their discords to its own bewildering harmony. It almost surrounds Rosslyn Castle, whose foundations of rock and stone meet with a superb

indifference to the *mine* and *thine* of nature. The castle summit, a lofty tattered fragment, shimmers against the sky, almost as airy in its high battered age as the leaves that flicker down beneath.

From Castlelaw you can see neither the castle nor the North Esk. But you may see the unlovely villages dotting the landscape with a cheerful grace. Distance denies their crudities and makes all fair. And far-off, there is the grayness of ocean and infinite sky. The Logan Burn has met the North Esk, and the North Esk has met the Forth, where the Forth has almost met the German Ocean in the long fringe of Musselburgh sands.

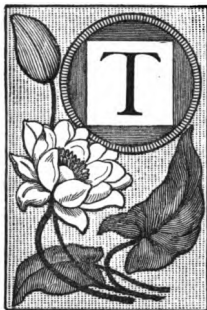
It may be the evening time when the May mists have charged the air, and the Lammermuir hills reflect the sunset, and lie like pure rose petals against the pearl of the sky. And the silence of the evening becomes itself a loveliness, something akin to music or the odour of mountain thyme. Then you have made friends of the uplands, you have known them with such intimate love as discerns their idiosyncracies, their mysterious changeful symbols, and felt how near God comes to the soul in the strange sweetness of hills.



THE DOUGLAS WATER.

"Bent in a wind which bore to me a sound
Of far-off piteous bleat of lambs and sheep."

—*Christina Rossetti.*



HERE is one quiet bend in the Douglas Water where a few decades of years ago the twenty-third psalm should have been read. You could hear the village bells—the bell of the Kirk of St. Bride, and see the rustic people wending thither softly by the waterside.

In this strath winter lingers long. It may be early June, yet it seems that only now the spring time vindicates its claim. Only the firstlings of the buds have burst into full leaf upon the tree; scarce the first flowers have won possession in the holms; the water-floods are newly rejoiced in their redemption from the snows. The young lambs are ecstatic in the new good gift of life; they fleck the soft meadows that come to the riverside; they bleat after their woolly mothers who fleck the *howes* and *knowes*. Thereafter came the rugged, gentle

shepherd, noiseless as his flock, with his shepherd plaid gathered round him; his face, through the scars and furrows of its long life-toil, tranquilized by the sound of those Sabbath bells—the bell of the Kirk of St. Bride.

The idyll is as old and sweet as the days which inspired the Hebrew pastoral. It had not yet vanished from Scotland; nay, lingered with primitive beauty on those high west-country moors, where the letters of Samuel Rutherford were still read with sober grace, those old quaint letters to the Lady Kenmure and the Lady Grizel Baillie, and the lawyers and the statesmen of the land, which read like the letters of St. John. For in those days it was not thought necessary to dilute the reading of the peasant people; to prepare for them other than the wisdom which was helpful to the lives of their rulers. The best thoughts of the finest spirits were read in the low thatched cots. There was then no specialty of literature prepared for the poor; so their hearts were kept noble and devout, and the pitiless barriers of wealth and poverty were only the barriers of sense. The shepherd read and loved by his one peat fire what the landlord read and loved in his library, among the archives of the centuries. And the Letters which had comforted the hearts of those old devout gentlewomen, or strengthened the spirit of the marquis who sat in the council of the king, brought the same consolation and fortitude to the humble people in the dales.

If they read of "the blessed birds of Anwoth," there was old St. Bride's near the water, where also the birds had made a home and lifted many thoughts on their wings. If they read the solemn warning, "Make your accounts ready; read them ere ye come to the waterside, for your afternoon will wear short, and your sun will fall low and go down; and ye know that this long time your Lord hath waited on you;" here is the glimmer of the Douglas, and the shadows from the low sun, and always that old kirk-yard of St. Bride's emphasising the warning in the sunset. If they read: "I know ye are minding your sweet country, and not taking your inns (the place of your banishment) for your home;" yonder, in the drifts of glory of the early morning sky is the "sweet country," in a parable—the weary world of want and toil which begins again with the light, it truly is the inn, and the far land is *home*. And then of the summer birds which sing in the branches of the tree of life, and the "fair flowers on the way to heaven" of which "a smell in the by-going is sufficient;" had not the peasant learned them long ago, as he went his quiet way beside the waters, and heard the mavis sing among the black thorns, or watched the daisies whiten in the grass, and felt how round the lintel of his own toil stricken life, there were but few birds to sing and few flowers to gather, at best, on his long way homeward? But so his life was saved from growing a hard material life; and while he folded his sheep, or sowed in the windy spring-time, or put his

sickle in the grain, by some such words as Samuel Rutherford's the gates of heaven were kept ajar.

The strath of the Douglas water with all the country round is rich in memories of the Covenant, fertile in the characteristics which are signified by such memories. And the water flows sedately, as a moorland stream should, among the close nibbled grass, among but a few flowers. One is not embarrassed here by any wealth of bloom. Winter loiters too long on those high moorland places, and returns too often before the bud has had time to change into the flower.

It is an upland parish, down which the winds career, rioting in a wild way that perplexes the stranger accustomed to winds more subdued. The water, indeed, no accomplice to the winds, flows softly through the green pastures, softly as a lowland water, having no bravery of romance, but a homely duty, worn as sweetly as Enid's faded silk. The Douglas water is beautiful only with the common beauty which makes the life of every day. It is not lost in black shadow; it has no superlatives of light. It offers no surprises of loveliness, like the nightingale and the wild night-campion, bird and flower beloved of the dark. It is a place of shepherds and sheepfolds, and all implied in these; of green pastures and quiet waters where David's psalm should be read.

Yet with your psalter still by you, you may take up Izaak Walton, and read, with no sense of

unfitness the good old angler's thoughts. If you love quiet waters, he is already your friend, and you have many times secretly adjusted your fancies to his. He is even one of those friends for whom your love may be enthusiasm ; for whom, having exhausted all the adjectives of praise you may verbalise every delicious noun into meaning yet more tender, and never express the affection you have lavished on his curious pages.

It is, indeed, necessary you should know how to read those pages with discretion ; as indeed it is necessary to know how to read all pages. You must have the quick imaginative eye which perceives at a glance what to *skip*, the intuition of the dove which trembles when the hawk is in the air. The art of reading, it may not be questioned, is one of the fine arts. One must be born with a genius for it, or it may be acquired by the patient exercise of skill. A nervous temperament, a quick imagination are perhaps its requisites ; a something by which you forecast the sympathetic points of a book, and are able to pass unconsciously the points which would give you pain.

It is in this delicate spiritual armour one must approach the Complete Angler ! and then what an anodyne is here for a thousand little fretting cares ! It is like cooling one's brow in a handful of wind-flowers newly blown ; like a low warm breeze blown over a stream that is bordered with far-off meadow sweet ; like the kiss of a little child when one is

weary or sad; like the familiar voice whose tone is love and rest.

If you wish to make sermons of his book, you find it replete with texts; yet he himself does not sermonize except on rare occasions. Then he prepares himself for the pleasant task. He seats you in the greenest of shadows, he allows you the voluntary of the birds; perhaps also of a low wind which ruffles the primrose leaves. He chooses his text with a sweet deliberation, and is as well prepared with authorities of book and date and name as is his fishing basket with all the requirements of the angler. He offers you the dearest little fables which you must not for a moment reject; he quotes Seneca and Camden and Nicolas Caussen of Troyes; and prays you in the same breath to note the wind while you sit beneath the sycamore tree.

He has stories of Edmonston and Waltham Cross, and the finest ear for pensive music. He loves to hear his Kenna sing in the shadow of the summer leaves. He loves the book of Common Prayer. He has a *Te Deum* for flowers and showers and content, and "leisure to go a fishing."

You cannot choose but be his friend, and love the things he loves. You are initiated to that pretty inn with "the lavender in the windows, and the twenty ballads stuck about the walls." You know the stream at the foot of the meadow, which is chequered with lady-smocks and water-lilies. You

know the coveted rest where the linen looked so white, and the grove where the birds contended with the echo that seemed to live in the tree. You know the favourite fishing house, Bleak Hall, on the banks of the, Lea—one mile from Edmonston—O changed years! You know how the barbel haunts in summer the swift and small streams. You know the little brook in Kent which the trout peculiarly affects; you know what fish loves the water-thyme, and what fish haunts the shady shallows. You know what holy Mr Herbert says of sweet May days and May flowers. You have also gleaned here many dainty versicles which nowhere else you may find.

You rested on some low knoll beside the Douglas Water, and discovered that among these green meadows the old English angler might have lived. Singing to herself beside the river, you heard "The Fair and Happy Milk-Maid," who made her hands hard with labour and her heart soft with pity; who dared go alone and unfold sheep in the night, being never alone, but still accompanied with "old songs, honest thoughts and prayers."

Here, since the first Douglas built his castle on the near sward, she had listened at evening time, "while Corydon the shepherd played so purely on his oaten reed;"—listened, as did Milkmaid Maudlin by the brook in the Essex meadow, with only such Scottish variations as the Douglas Water made upon the Lea.

It was the same old pastoral, told here as there, and the shepherd and the milkmaid were the same.

They had gone at night to an apple orchard to hear the fairies sing, or travelled many a moorland mile to pledge themselves at some running water where the lands of three lairds met. The pretty superstition harmed neither the shepherd nor the maid, but only enriched with some human emotions the orchard and the lonely burnside.

Here the shepherds and their dogs gathered in the July noons, while the sheep were plunged in the brown water, and dripping and bewildered, shook their long fair wool dry on the further side. And the soft deep-hued lowland water curved between the banks of green grass, not fretted by stones, nor disturbed by obtrusive shadows, nor dulled into sudden languors by unexplainable pools, but with a motion as tender as the ripple in Clytie's hair, flowed on through the green pastures to green pastures still.

Not indeed that this pastoral water has no more varied note. Douglasdale, receding from the waters, is full of shadows of its own; and is rich in the great fir-wood which darkens one hillside. You must know the mystery of stillness and gloom that broods among fir-trees. For the darkness of fir-woods is not the darkness of woods of oak or ash or elm. They are not lighted, flecked and glorified by sprays of sunbeams dashed among the obscurities of leaves. There is no long gleamy grass to repeat the lights and the shadows, to make those warm vivid contrasts which nature is assumed to love so well.

Here grass is not; only flecks of velvety moss of the lovely iridescence which one finds on the peacock's wing. Blent with the moss is the debris of centuries of twigs and cones in that harmonious confusion which only a fir-wood can devise. At intervals out of this tender dark, a beech-fern, an oak-fern asserts itself, seeming to have no concord with anything else beside; a bright pure fervid green, like a sudden fresh glance through funeral formalities, and oppressions of splendid calm, into some tender, new-opened and otherwhere gleaming world of softest loveliness. The vistas of the fir-wood are long; their light is subdued and cold; a chill and silence shivers through them as of a Cathedral Crypt. You do not gather wild-flowers here; you only gather cones. They too are beautiful, with their rich old grays and browns against the young tremor of the ferns; but they are beautiful only with the sombre beauty of the wood. The fir-wood has no vivacities, no gaieties of bright suggestion, no places for early dreams. Its depths are too mysteriously silent—having no ripple of leaves. Its spines rise up against the sweetest sky, motionless, black, admonitory. It has never in deepest winter any lattice of branchlets through whose spaces you may wonder wistfully, and project your dreams and imaginings to the infinite light beyond.

But the great red trunks rise up, like pillars in the temple of God. Is it the resinous sweetness exhaled from those wounded trunks—the sole

invigorating contrasts of those warm red positive tones—which in certain moods reverses your inward judgment of the genius of fir-trees?

You know not. But their gloom, their silence has ceased to oppress you here. You can discern the wild-wood music which, in some states of atmosphere, vibrates through forests of pine;—weird and delicate harmonies, as if a thousand unseen lyrists were playing on solemn strings. Do you ask for the ripple of leaves? These would only produce subtle discords. The instruments beloved of the player are those unyielding spines.

The fir-wood is full of whispered music; not penitent psalms, but the music of triumph and trust; sylvan antiphonies sung by the near and the far branches with all the strength of joy. How strophe is rung to antistrophe through the rhythm of the great trees,—hope answering fear, triumph answering pain; how rises the sweet epode when a low wind comes from far, and gathers all the scattered music into one victorious swell, that lingers and trembles and dies away into all the hollows of the wood, and leaves the silence with you—the silence and your wonder only. You say, yet with self-upbraiding, “here one might commune with God;” as if over all the world there were not the same lyres and voices waiting for the heart of the singer; as if care, love, hope, disappointment, fear, were not truer instruments, of vibration more sympathetic, of strings more subtle and more varied

and more sweet than any "tree in the garden of God," any pine wood or wandering water, or lonely silver sea—as if the music which rings through the pine-wood did not vibrate through all human destiny, every spirit, significantly beautiful, made beautiful through tried life, through hopes frustrated, through some despairs—through winds that have swept down the shadows from far, and rung through shivering boughs.

In such moods you love your beautiful pine-wood, and reverse all your judgments on its gloom. And you hear the church bells ringing—the bell of old St. Bride's.

Does the fascination of the distant bells draw you from the fir-woods? Would you go down the village streets?—those quaint, loitering, superannuated streets with so many memories, with only a few hopes? The sound of the village bells invades the consciousness; it stirs reluctant reminiscence, while you still are in the shadow of the trees. For the reminiscences of St. Bride's are not tender reminiscences—village church though it be, near the winding of the pastoral water. The mystical windy music blown down through a wood of pines, the singing of a lonely water, the chime of village bells—these should prelude some tenderer recital than this you are about to listen to. The green soft holms of the Douglas water are set in too provocative proximity to a certain stern old story for whose tragedy you are not prepared, the obtrusion of whose horrors you resent.

In the heart of the little old crumbling town rises the old crumbling church, where were lived the sacred hours of the quiet people in the dales, in the days before Knox, while the church had still its altar and its priests; where in later times the gray aisles were filled with new voices of praise—the psalms of the shepherds, who comforted their hearts with the Letters of Samuel Rutherford; the psalms of the anglers who meditated as old Izaak Walton, and came from the banks of the water to worship in old St. Bride's.

Yet this gray church of St. Bride's, set in the village street, is less reminiscent of those than of one old battle-cry.

The church is very old, partly a mausoleum, mostly a ruin now. The choir, which was the burial vault of the Douglasses, is filled with the stone and lead coffins of those old feudal lords of nearly six hundred years. On one of these lies a casket which holds the dust of the heart of "the good Sir James," that Douglas of whom you are already apprized by legend, history and song, that he was entrusted by Bruce to bear his heart to Palestine, and fell on his way thither in battle with the Saracens. The old poet Barbour recites the picturesque mournful story, how the ships came back to Scotland, bringing home Sir James dead; and how

"his bones full honorably
Intil the kirk of Douglas were
Buried with dule and meikle care."

Barbour also recites how Sir Archibald, the brother of the dead knight, got "alabastor baith fair and fine" to make a tomb

"sa richly
As it behoved one sa worthy."

This tomb is in the ruined choir, its first magnificence long effaced by violence and time, the "albastor baith fair and fine" spoiled of much loveliness, yet bearing some traces still of the lavish cost and skill expended to rear a monument "as behoved one sa worthy." Scott, whose last journey in Scotland was to the kirk of St. Bride's, affirms that "the monument in its original state must have been not inferior in any respect to the best of the same period in Westminster Abbey."

And this was in the period of the reign of Edward Third, when the lovely face of Queen Eleanor lay placid on her altar-tomb, when its multitude of chapels were already fretted with the sculptor's tenderest art. But the kings and queens have been enshrined in the nation's capital, while the Douglas' tomb has lain in the little village church whose ruined chancel has been rifled by the winds of all the centuries. And if the winds of Douglasdale might have spared the soldier's tomb, it had more relentless enemies who worked, not as nature works (healing always with loveliness of tender moss and flowers whatever scars she makes on man's work or her own), but with triumph of spoliation and dishonour,

wantonly defacing whatever was sacred to the hearts of the people, and leaving no healing beauty as is the wont of time. Wealth of ivy there is none—that green thing which covers a multitude of sins with a plenitude as rich as love’s—whose wreaths at Egyptian consecrations were carried before the vine, because the vine lost its leaves, but the ivy never. The ivy has not covered with its wonted tenderness of redress that old chancel of St. Bride’s, where Cromwell’s soldiers stabled their horses and defaced the effigies and tombs.

But Cromwell’s possession of the church is an incident and nothing more. A much earlier sacrilege was perpetrated among its shrines. It was when Scotland was filled with the soldiers of Edward First, who held Douglas Castle with most other Scottish strongholds. On Palm Sunday the English soldiers had “entered into the church with palms in their hands,” when suddenly “the Douglas slogan” was cried through the chancel of St. Bride’s. “The English that were in the church kept off the Scots, and having advantage of the strait and narrow entrie, defended themselves manfully.” But they were presently overpowered, and the garrison being slain in the kirk, the castle was retaken.

The story is told at much length, the old chroniclers lingering on it with many a touch of fierce romance, through pages in which your fine art of reading is called into vivid requisition. Here you tread warily with all your quick instincts alert. Here are

oppressions of history from which your heart revolts, feuds, defeat, attack from which you escape gladly to the shelter of the shepherd's cot, to the tranquil shadows on the holms, to the green dewy grass of to-day.

The harsh narration is partly humanised by a chivalrous story of love, as indeed through all harshest Scottish story such a charmed thread is used to run. And after that wild Douglas slogan cried through the church of St. Bride's, you hear the love story of the English knight who had taken the castle of Douglas. Not as anything apart, but as mixed and intermixed with the warfare in the manner of mediæval history.

Scott has woven the romance into his Castle Dangerous, yet has touched it with no points brighter than the simple old annalists provide. Indeed, if you wish romance you must go to those fountains of history, the annals of the men who lived and loved and died among the things of which they write—who saw no marvel in the marvels which are now analysed or disbelieved, but touched them with the tenderest unconscious touches of weirdness, or pathos, or enthusiasm.

One of these tells the love story of the keeping of Douglas Castle; of a beautiful English maiden, the Lady Augusta De Berkeley, whose hand Sir John De Walton was to win by holding Douglas Castle for a year and a day. But how after some months had passed, the lady, in more tender mood, relented in

her hard condition, and wrote a letter of recall to her knight. And how on the same day there came a message of defiance from Douglas, declaring that the castle should be his own again before Palm Sunday night. How De Walton, holding the two missives, thought of honour more than love, and resolved still to keep the stronghold for the stipulated year and a day. Yet how his soldiers went to the church of St. Bride's on that fatal Palm Sunday, with the peaceful willow catkins in their hands instead of swords; how the castle was retaken; and how "the generous Douglas was grieved full sorely" when, after having slain De Walton, he heard the story of his love.

Then, also, the annalist tells how Douglas, not having men to keep it, burned down his own castle, and destroyed all that it contained. The flames from the burning castle lit the dale on that Palm Sunday night, while yet the spring had scarcely broken along the waterside. Perhaps there was already whispered the prophecy repeated long, that as often as Douglas Castle was destroyed, it should be the more splendidly rebuilt. The prophecy was many times fulfilled; now, on the soft green grass near the new house of Douglas, only one ruined tower remains of the old stronghold.

The church of St. Bride's, of older history than the castle, has survived it in its ruins. Long before any Norman knight had coveted the green waterside, it was held by the monks of Kelso, who built the

little church in the village, where the people worship still. The peaceful monks from their great abbey came here to teach and pray, and to angle in the moorland water that winds through the green holms. And curiously, those earliest memories come nearest the heart now as the solemn sound of the village bells float down the waterside.

The Douglas slogan cried through St. Bride's, and the Lady Augusta's proud love, and De Walton who kept the stronghold, and "the good Sir James" who slew him and then "grieved full sorely," are but words of an old romance, that was lived in the mediæval shadows—lived in conditions too unfamiliar to be ever for us more than romance. But in the little kirk which the monks of Kelso built so many centuries ago, the village people gather still with their loves and their cares and their fears.

Near it the water winds—unaged, serene. One perceives the languid scent of clover, the quickening aroma of the thyme. One has left the shadow of the chancel of St. Bride's, one has left antiquity behind.

The winds sweep down the watershed; one feels here the breeziness of life. Its endless, changeful vistas, its vivid possibilities, its sweet, certain, sober duties, its heroisms of effort, its splendours of endurance—all the light and the dark which make life the good gift it is; these, like an inspiration, in hours of lethargy or distrust, come to us on the Douglas Water, the dear and quiet stream. How soberly

and sweetly it flows, wending on with a ceaseless duty through the green pasture land! What grace it takes from the wind and the sunshine as it keeps its tranquil way, content to sing to the shepherds and the ploughmen and the weavers who have left their looms and come meditatively out in the early starlight to rest by the waterside.

For these have known toil and care and the keen struggle of life, and must renew it in the morning when the lark resumes his song. Yet they too will have their songs by the loom and the sheepfold and plough, a thankful heart being born within and God's good gift of hope. Hope is always a prophecy of something the future holds. And sitting on some quiet knoll in a bend of their Douglas Water, the peasants may read always for their own, the beloved shepherd's psalm.

THE CLUDEN.

"The holy time is quiet as a nun,
Breathless with adoration."

— *Wordsworth.*



HE ruins of a beautiful nunnery, repeated where the "wind furls the water," this and its own beauty are the allurements of the Cluden. Yet it was also famous as a fishing stream—such a still, shady, unfrequented water as "the melancholy pike" loves; loved, too, by the salmon that will always to the fountain-head; by the dainty and pure trout which desires the sweetest rivers always. The fishing in the nuns' water was a privilege much esteemed, which the Abbesses of Lincluden adjudged with a sweet supremacy, as they ruled in their fair cloisters three hundred years and more.

The story of the foundation of the Abbey on the banks of the Cluden Water is full of suggestive ellipses to be filled as fancy will. It is a story half told whose fragments you will piece together, whose

proportions you will compute by the measure of your own charity.

Burdens of wrong and repentance, of assertion and denial, picturesque contradictions, dark and bright bewildering passions, hates, ambitions, and reprisals; out of all these you may make what you will of incitement to the building of the cloister; you will choose your own legend for it, yet find it lovely still.

Be the motive what it might, this fair cloister of Lincluden was founded by a certain Lord of Galloway, who was fiercest of all his fierce race. He attacked and demolished royal castles, and slew the peaceful people round their gates. There was no violence too cruel for his hand to perpetrate. He followed William the Lion into England, and the terror of his name went with him over the Border. He was slain by his own brother Gilbert, at the family castle of Loch Fergus, near the end of September in 1174.

But this Gallovidian family in which such deeds were done were generous givers to the church in the time of its early necessity. One of them founded a convent of White Monks in Iona, and a convent of Black Nuns of which his sister Beatrice was prioress. Uchtred founded for the same order the convent by the Cluden Water, in what hour of penitence or victory the secrets of his life hold fast.

How far before the end of his life he gifted to the Benedictine Nuns the fair land and water, seems to have passed out of history with all its circumstance.

Perhaps it was not strange that the fierce Gallovidian chief should shelter his soul in the silence of a cloister of veiled nuns. It was the fashion of the century. Visions of the ecstatic nun, Elizabeth of Schönaun, had wandered certainly on the wings of wonder from her convent on the Rhine. The legend of St. Ursula and her Virgins had miraculously revived in Cologne, with the rebuilding of the city in the early part of the century; and would not the palmers and the wandering friars bring the story to the Western Seas, and recite it even in such robber holds as the castle of Uchtred of Galloway?

Were it so or were it not, Uchtred built the convent here in the last lovely bend of the Cluden, ere it loses its waters in the Nith. The beautiful shattered ruins in a quiet place of trees still look down on the hermit stream, and repeat themselves among the ripples of the water and the shadows of the summer leaves. This "meeting of the waters" was one of Burns's favourite haunts; it makes a lovely little landscape, quiet and peaceful as a dream, with the streams of the Cluden and the Nith more than half encircling the ruins. Uchtred chose with a generous heart and a fine eye for beauty, when he gifted this fairest nook of Galloway to the Benedictine Nuns. It must have been lovelier still when those garden-loving recluses moved among its shadows, and tended with constant hands the coyest, tenderest flowers. Vestiges of their early gardening lingered not long ago, on the sunny south-east bank,

where the blossoms were warmest and sheltered, and wooed as beloved blossoms are. One may imagine the loveliness of the gardens of the old nuns, to whom were forbidden all the sweetnesses and unexpressed joys of home; to whom day and night must have deepened into such a long monotone, and to whom the splendour and loves of the flowers must have been the one efflorescence that came with a sweet variety of advance and retrogression of life. The flowers made a much warmer calendar than the calendar of the saints, and were no forbidden pleasures, but full of all sacred use. How fair were the Lent lilies, which to gather and tend and nurture was itself devotion and peace! The Abbot Alexander of Cirencester wrote about this time a treatise on "A noble garden," which was to contain all the flowers a recluse's heart could love; the sunflowers which the nuns skilled in art copied in the nimbi of their saints, the narcissi whose white flowers were perpetual sermons on purity, the great scarlet poppies with their dark eyes, which wise leeches used for healing, the soft blue gleamy violets which they shed like tears before their shrine, and the roses best of all, which were like all emblems in one, which were to be grafted and pruned, and sheltered from wind and heat, and offered like the first fruits of life, like the passions and the dreams of youth.

Whether the nuns of Lincluden were gifted we are not told. They left no work behind them for the years to praise or blame. The "*Hortus Deliciarum*"

of the Alsatian Abbess Herrade, the sacred comedy of Hroswitha, the nun of Gandersheim—later, the mystical manual of Agnes Arnould of Port Royal—the *Chapelet Secrèt* which was honoured and concealed at Rome—these and many more such have come down in conventual archives, to the glory of the writers, and the convents where they ruled or served. But the abbey by the hermit Cluden left none of these. It lay in a sweet mediocrity among its shadows and its flowers. The nuns performed their quiet duty of decocting healing herbs, embroidering copes and altar-cloths and making garments for the poor. Lincluden was content in its lowliness, and from its shady Scottish river side might whisper that the Abbess Herrade had scarce yet learned the grace of humility while she kept the white, blues and greens of her palette for the nimbi of other saints, and painted her nuns like her apostles with halo of pure gold. There were gentler and lowlier recluses, who otherwise used their art, for whom Herrade's proud missal was a pitiful irony, whose dainty and delicate illuminations had the fragrance of pale flowers about them, that were gathered in shadows too deep to be touched by the sunbeam of applause. Recluses there were who were content to break their box of alabaster in the solitude, to dedicate their poor lives to God in the peace of this silent self-suppression, knowing that outside the cloister, souls, nobler, braver, sweeter than their own, fought out the rough battle they dared not face.

And the echo of border warfare fell deep through their Ave Marias, and the light above the high altar changed into a Galloway sunset, that flashed on the prow of a coracle going out to meet the green waves. But the jackdaw makes his nest in the belfry that was built by Uchtred of Galloway. And the linnet comes down in the winter time, to find shelter in the garden of the nuns, or builds, in the late spring, undisturbed, among the low alders, its pretty nest of the young grass and the moss and the willow-catkins. How fearlessly he builds here, where no step comes but the quiet steps of the veiled women, who have all their human loves to spare for the birds and the young flowers. And all through the time of apple blossom, and the whitening hedges of the May, they shall watch the pale blue eggs till the tender younglings come, and hear the low, sweet, happy singing of the brown bird upon the tree.

So two centuries passed over the Abbey, the wildest in Scottish history, but still the quiet nuns, unmolested, lived in peace by their own waterside. No legendary dove with parchment scroll bore any complaint across the seas to the Pope Clement whom Andrea Orcagna was painting in his fresco of Judgment. But the ripple which could not reach Rome disturbed the Earl of Douglas, that famous Earl Archibald the Grim who had married Joan Bothwell and hung his pennon on her castle walls. One cannot help imagining the Earl carried his

uprightness with unseemly ostentation. He was scandalised, say the historians, by the frivolities of the nuns of Lincluden; and the abbey stood so fair and sweet—strong also, thus girt with its two guardian streams, and the tempting fishing of its waters, and the forest with its fallow deer. Earl Douglas reclaimed the gift of his Gallovidian ancestor, and with a lofty show of righteousness expelled the Benedictine Nuns. Other nuns than those of Lincluden were slandered for the sweet lands they held.

Whether the vale of Cluden was pleased to exchange the reign of the Abbess for the Earl was not of account, and is not told. The cloisters of the nuns rang with mirth which had never roused their echoes before; and skilled masons came from far, and carved and added and restored, building halls that had space for revelry and chambers fit for ladies' rest. And here the Earl brought the Countess Joan and the Princess Margaret his daughter-in-law, who much loved the pleasant abbey with its gardens and its streams. From her chamber the new wedded princess heard the songs of two waters, and if not an imaginative soul might find them glad music enough. The birds did not miss the nuns' vespers but warbled all the same, the wood-doves cooed in the shadow, and the black-birds built in the thorn. And the robin that came in winter to sing his never-failing song, did not ask if the hand that fed him was a court-lady's or a nun's.

Lincluden, apart by its hermit stream, was long forgotten of the minstrels. It is only noticed in a ballad which dates but a century back. The ballad refers to the Bruce and Cumming tragedy in the Dominican church at Dumfries. The words are put in the lips of the lady-love of Kilpatrick—

“To sweet Lincluden’s holy cells
Fu’ dowie I ’ll repair,
There peace wi’ gentle patience dwells,
Nae deadly feuds are there.
In tears I’ll wither ilka charm,
Like draps of balefu’ yew,
And wail the beauty that could harm
A knight sae brave and true.”

THE FAIRLIE BURN.

"Watch the sunset from the shore
Go down the ways of gold."

—*Andrew Lang.*



HE Fairlie of forty years ago was not the Fairlie of to-day. This one must premise on behalf of stream and glen. The village that nestled at the burnfoot was a little fisher village. On the sands lay the nets of the fishermen; on the low coil of rocks beyond them only fisher wives watched in the sunsets of the beautiful long ago.

It was one of those places of which your happy childhood kept dreams. Did the Venetian women sing Tasso's songs on their shore, each listening for her husband's voice responding over the waves? Here, down Fairlie Roads, you heard just such songs float when the fishing fleet came in through the morning from the western and northern seas; only they were not Tasso's songs, but something sweeter, dearer. And the light that lay in these sunshiny roads between Cumbrae and Kyle was more

mysteriously beautiful, more suggestive of "golden gates" than any that flashed on black gondolas in the warm lagunes Titians loved. So lavish was your youth of its colours, so lavish of its melodies.

You did not know the homely silence which hides most love and care; the beautiful, still pathos of toil with scarcely time for sorrow. But you saw the river in the sunset unroll its wasteful gold; you watched the splendour of the storm-clouds that gathered where the deep lochs lie; you rested by those fisher cottages which clustered on the edge of the sea, or wandered on the tawny sand with the green grass matted through it, and the tiny pools, golden or crimson or sapphire, or only windy gray, giving back bits of the skylight among the old nets and keels. And this was poetry enough without any castle or stream, or any legend of the Vikings, or tragedy of love or war. You come back and your childhood's dream is lost in the broad light; you are bereft of your vision, it returns no more.

Yet the grassy sands keep what they can, and the sunsets do not pale, and the stream comes down through the glen unresentful of trodden places. Here is the wild garlic with its lovely, unsweet flower, and the starry whorls of sweet woodruff grown together like nettle and dock. And the little lynns flash beneath with perfectly fairy beauty, defiant of holiday makers to steal one diamond from their light. And the tangle of beech and birch, and the bridges of old fir-trees, make pictures that are

still quiet and beautiful with the great beauty which haunts such deep glens.

And notwithstanding you have never required such for love, but found the little lynns enough—the lynns and the tree shadows and the hazel thickets and the flowers—yet the centuries have left to the Fairlie a romance as to most of Scottish streams. From shreds of history and poetry and story told by old lips, it is pieced together with what truth or travesty may be. The fisher village at the burnfoot was a homely parenthesis—a mere insertion in the story as of something to be noted and passed. The gray ruined castle on the hill proclaimed itself to the seas, flung its gauntlet down to the waterside and made its own history.

Not much to read or tell now—a legend and a name which provoke the riot of fancy and scarcely offer to do more. The name of Robert Second and the name of the first Fairlies—what can you do with either but make stories of them? Your own pictures for the old arras—your own sculptures for the old dais, are nearly all that are likely to pass from the castle gate. Yet some beautiful vision of maidenhood, whom tradition calls Fairlie Fair, haunts an older story, and mixes with the Norse Kings. The romance is told in “Hardyknute,” that ballad of the early part of last century which imitates an older ballad, and in the manner of imitations misses some charms new and old. It begins, indeed, with a march as stately as the step of its ancient hero.

Every one is familiar with the gray old lord and his peerless dame whom he loved so well, and his golden haired Fairlie Fair, and his "thirteen valiant sons."

"Stately stept he east the wa'
And stately stept he west,
Full seventy years he now had seen
With scarce seven years of rest.
High on a hill his castle stood
Wi' halls and towers a hicht,
And guidly chambers there to see
Where he lodged mony a knight."

The square ivied keep, which moulders now on the hill, is of some more modern date than this castle of Hardyknute, and keeps but little reminiscence of the splendour of his halls and towers. But beneath the castle is the glen; through its sweet depths of greenery the lynn flashes still—with the weary lovely music of its waters, and the secret splendours of its flowers, and the half revealed personality of the legendary Fairlie Fair haunting it in eternal love and sorrow. This glen and legend, long neglected by the singers, provoked a song at last.

Hardyknute has its own peculiar interest, being a ballad with a history—a ballad of which much account was made in the early part of last century. That it had consummately prolonged the tones of the old minstrelsy is proved from its acceptance by men who knew that minstrelsy well, and whose mental habits were by no means those of credulity.

When Sir Gilbert Elliot of Minto, who, versed not only by profession in weighing false and true, but learned (by ancestral love and use) in all ballad lore, pronounced it of true antiquity, and assisted its first publication in the year 1715, might not those of less authority greet it with dearest certitude. He was himself a flutist and a maker of ballads, and naturally accredited with skill in discerning the true ring of the old.

The ballad of Hardyknute was said to have been discovered by Lady Wardlaw. She had found "this choice morsel of antiquity," it was rumoured with delightful zest, written on shreds of paper round which some old silks had been wound. The lady, at her patient embroidery, having reached the end of her clues, using up the old silks of some gentle skilled ancestress, came upon this morsel of antiquity, this commemoration of the splendours of the castle on Fairlie hill, of the prowess of the old Lord Hardyknute, of the love of Fairlie Fair.

Here was a treasure-trove. Under the faded ancient silks how many years had it lain? Who had transcribed it for the worker, who embroidered altar-piece or pennon, yet thought it but an idle song, and wound the skeins of shimmering colour round it in careless scorn? Its recovery was a sort of romance. Yet there were unbelieving souls to whom Lady Wardlaw would not or could not explain what they desired.

Lord Hailes declared it partly ancient, but

thought it had been retouched by the lady when she rescued the original from her silks. Its real author was afterwards said to be Sir John Bruce of Kinross. Sir John had given it to Lady Wardlaw with instructions to issue it thus to the world, or at least to that world of Scotland which loved ballads, and always thought that music sweetest that had rung through the changes of the years. For hymns and ballads are like Cremonas. Their tones are enriched and subdued in a thousand mysterious ways by all the love and sorrow that may wail themselves to sleep upon the strings. It seems that some human emotions from without must interfuse themselves with all poetry, must have met and blent with the poet's own emotion, before the perfect song is made for the heart of the people.

To "steal a march" on the heart of Scotland by giving this new ballad for old, Sir John had first himself attempted, writing to a friend thus:—"To perform my promise, I send you a true copy of the MS. I found some weeks ago in a vault at Dunfermline. It is written on vellum, in a fair Gothic character, but is so much defaced by time, as you'll find that the tenth part is not legible."

The version of the clues of silk was found more successful than that of the convent vault. But the authorship of Hardyknute is still an uncertainty. It is given in most books of ballads with the name of Sir John Bruce.

If the ballad is not yet two hundred years old, the

fragments of tradition on which it is founded reach back quite far enough to satisfy the exactions of the antiquary. The story, as once you might have heard it along the waterside, is richer than "Hardyknute" in the elements of early romance. But the ballad has woven into it those touches of delicate detail which the rude old story could not pause to note.

How the green bodice of the dame of Hardyknute had silken and silver cords, how her apron was embroidered "with needle-work sae rare" as no hand could accomplish "save hand o' Fairlie Fair," is quite after the manner of the minstrels who had never disdained to linger on those beautiful home arts, nor accounted such feminine industries other than flowers for their song. Older and greater poets had made famous exemplars in the manner. Solomon had his Virtuous Woman who covered her household with scarlet; Homer his fated Helen who worked on the walls of Troy, sitting mournfully with the old king, and watching between her silken stitches the battle on the plains below. For needlework seems to have been provided as a sedative in the lives of women whose part in the world's warfare has so often to be fought "in their own hearts watching from the walls," while the lives more precious to them than their own are in the thickest of the strife. From the Castle of Fairlie and from the tower of Troy must not the same love watch?

"The king of Norse in summer tyde
He came with power and might,

Landed in fair Scotland the isle,
Wi' mony a hardy knight.

'Go, little page, tell Hardyknute,
That lives on hill sae hie,
To draw his sword, the dread o' foes,
An' haste an' follow me.'

The little page flew swift as dart
Flung by his master's arm.
'Come down, come down, Lord Hardyknute,
And rid your king frae harm.'

He has taen a horn as green as glas
And gi'en five sounds sae shrill
That trees in greenwood shook thereat,
Sae loud rang ilka hill.

His sons in manly sport and glee
Had passed that summer morn,
When lo, down in a grassy dale,
They heard their father's horn.

'That horn,' quoth they, 'ne'er sounds in peace:
We haif other sports to byde.'
And soon they hied them up the hill,
And sune were at his syde.

'Late, late yestreen, I weened in peace
To end my lengthen'd lyfe,
My age might well excuse my arm
Frae manly feats of strife.

But now that Norse dois proudly boast
Fair Scotland to enthrall,
It's ne'er be said of Hardyknute
He feared to fight or fall.

Robin of Rothesay, bend thy bow,
Thy arrows shoot say weil,

Mony a comely countenance
They have turned deathly pale.
Farewell, my dame, my peerless gude,
And tuke her by the hand,
'Fairer to me in age you seem
Than maids for beautie famed.

My youngest son shall here remain
To guard these statelie towers,
And shut the silver bolt that keeps
Sae fast your painted bowers.'

And first she wet her comely cheek,
And then her boddice grene,
Her silken cords of twirtle twist
Weil plett wi' silver schene,

And apron set wi' mony a dice
Of needle-work sae rare,
Wove by no hand, as ye may guess,
Save hand of Fairley Fair.

And he has ridden ower muir and moss,
Ower hills and mony a glen,
When he came to a wounded knight
Making a heavy mane.

'Sir knight, gin ye were in my bower,
To lean on silken seat,
My lady's kindly care you 'd prove
Who ne'er kend deadly hate.

Her self would watch ye a' the day,
Her maids at deid of night,
And Fairley Fair your heart would cheer
As she stood in your sight.'"

The ballad confesses to being only a fragment, and
breaks off with the story half told. But the legend,

years ago, lingered over by the boatmen at the burn-foot, had a much tenderer romance, told without adornment in rude prose and rude speech. It was of a time when Fairlie Roads were filled with the Norsemen's ships, those beautiful ships which the Vikings loved like living things. When "the birds and animals on the top of the masts which showed the way of the wind, and the figures of men and animals in gold and silver and amber", glistened against the low background of the green isles of the Cumbraes, sometime before the last battle with the sea kings was fought on the shore of Largs. The Danish rover wooed Fairlie Fair in the glen beside the waterfall, and carried her off to his ship in sight of her father's towers. And then there was the meeting of the ships of other lovers, and flight and pursuit and battle and tempest and death. Broken with many inconsistencies, filled in with a rude touch, there yet remains some old love tragedy between Danish jarl and Scottish lady begun by the Fairlie waterfall and closed in battle on the sea. Love and war and the storm-clouds, and the early sweet rehearsal of the story among the Fairlie flowers, these, set in the musical changes of seven changeful centuries, have lost and gathered as they would, but kept always their central charm. How, while the ships of her other suitors lay in Fairlie Roads, she sailed away with her Viking lover towards the Danish seas; and how a storm arose, and the Clyde took back its sea blossom, and hid away the

Fairlie Fair in the depths of its stormy Firth—this, woven into all dear complexities and tender perversities of song, and beautiful marvel of the minstrel, trembles over the broken little water that comes down among the shadows to the sea.

To have heard the story long ago from a boatman on his native rocks, with what accompaniment might be of broken sea and rippled water, with the soft, illusive, silvery mists floating where the lochs must lie, and some intense line of light dividing far land and sea, with the pause in the rude speech and the flash in the all-believing eye, and the simple, silent witness of the glen where the Fairlie Fair watched, and the rocks where the Viking drove ashore—this was more than to read in any tale of measured rhyme the detailed prowess of the Norseman, the unwearying dreams of his love.

The castle home of the Fairlie Fair was rebuilt in the fifteenth century, in the Renaissance time when dreamland and wonderland were wrought into aisles and transepts, and after thoughts of chapels and late necessities of shrines. But the loveliness lavished on the church was no adjunct of the baron's castle. The Fairlies rebuilt theirs in the rudest strength of the time. Some sweet aftering of ivy has hid the rudeness of baronial strength. The castle by the edge of the glen rises beautiful enough now with the green leaves of summer time gleaming through the lonely loopholes, an old eyrie of a stronghold, hung out above the waterfall towards the sunset sea.

It is said the building of the castles was watched over all the land with fear; yet surely they had their beautiful services as well as their fierce misuse. Chivalry has passed away, the hard servitude, the endless strife, but far from the sweet watersides there has come, in its bitter stead, misery as terrible as any Bois de Guilbert devised. There are no longer the convents with their vocation of poverty, to give heavenward counsel in need, and always ungrudged alms; no longer the knights with the ostentatious honour of their shield, who at least protected their vassals and aided them, rudely or otherwise. The ruined castles and convents join their pleading with the homeless poor for the wrecked lives, whose fathers' lives were once enfolded in their strength. May God help the poor hearts nurtured in despair, and help the full-handed to remember them pitifully for the love of their dear own.

The wail of the new sorrow rings through the music of the old, rings down through the songs of Norse love, and the sound of battle on the sea, rings through the voice of the little water which wets the forget-me-nots and ferns. For the voice of a river is like the chime of church bells. It gives itself to you with a selfless sweetness, which makes its voice your own. It interprets your mood. It makes your thought audible. There are brave and tender souls who meet the sorrow and the wrong, who are the true knights and valiant, and the tender almoners standing always at the unclosed

gate. There are the idle listeners, who but hear the ripple of the water with already the old love and sorrow lost in its white cascades, and no new song ever whispered down through the tangle of flowers that die and are born again in summer along the burnside. Yet all that was lofty in chivalry, and beautiful in consecrated life, appeals out of the dumb past in the voices of the little streams.

And this small Fairlie water, having no history to speak of, but only that mythical love-song so deep in the shady years—it also has its voice out of the past—its musical tender appeal. Let us not disinherit ourselves of whatever of brave or sweet floats from the far years over our lonely waters. The future needs the past.

BY THE NITH.

"Those coigns and eaves will crumble, while that stream
Will still run whispering—whispering night and day."

—*W. B. Scott.*



IN a meadow not close to the Nith, but yet within the vale of the river, there stands a pretty cluster of ruins blent with trees. Go in autumn to the waterside, when the pale leaves drift through the woods, and the softest murmur of a windfall brings the half-ripe acorns to your feet, when the shadows of delicate clouds flit among the piled barley sheaves, and a snatch of song from the reapers comes through the song of late birds, and let your heart be quiet enough to hear some earlier songs—some that were never set to music, except by the water and the winds.

The Nith, while it lingers in Ayrshire, one owns, is a cheerless stream, yet is full of a gentle beauty as it wanders on its way into Dumfries, and has many claims to love, which all wayfarers do not know. The waterside is haunted by the shade of the "Fair

Maid of Nithsdale;" Giles, the daughter of Giles, the princess, and Archibald, Lord of Galloway, who grew like a white flower on the banks of her native water, and had lovers from far and near, and lived out her own romance, and married the Orcadian Earl, and had a famous race of sons, while she still abode in the shadow, known only in the vale of the Nith, by her sweet girl sobriquet of the Fair Maiden Giles. The river is resonant with ballads of the "bonnie ships" that sailed from "Galloway's Land," and disputed the high seas with Scandinavian Vikings; ballads which skald and harper sang, emulous each of each in their praise of Dane and Gallovidian; ballads of the *curragh* and the green wave, of the rise of the weary winds, and the "routing" of the sea, of the brown hair no coif should cover, and the bower where light should come no more, on the edge of that weird water where the galleys of the Norseman rode.

But the idyll of the Nith is Sweetheart Abbey, which is more than a mile from its banks. All the songs fall into silence round this cluster of ruined piers. The village comes very near it in the manner of old regalities; the parish church, with its dear rugged psalms, nestles into its broken heart, and the tender touching name by which the old charters acknowledged it is slipping somewhat from it, as the story of its naming is obscured. But one pure figure emerges softly out of the fading nonentities, an outline in silver point on the palor

of the dim years: Devorgilla, the daughter of the last of the line of the old lords of Galloway, the memory of whose husband, John de Baliol, is kept in her faithful love. You may search long through the annals of the time to read so much as his name. You catch no glimpse of his hauberk or his spear among the chiefs of Galloway or Mar, or the men who turned back Danes and Northumbrians, or rallied round the king when the sceptre trembled in his hand. Was it Devorgilla's love which tempted him to live at home at ease? Did she count for him his feathered arrows, which should be mostly innocent of flight, or embroider with her skilled fingers the pennon he should scarcely soil in war? Or did she touch her soft harp in the starlight to gentle lays of love when she staid him by her from the battle to make the bowers of Nith more dear? She was indeed a daughter of the old lords of Galloway, and a daughter of the kings of Scotland through her great grandfather, William the Lion. Perhaps she was therefore the more weary of war, which the long traditions of her house made her too early learn. The wandering minstrel brought stories enough of these, and of feuds that were wearily old, and yet for ever new. If Devorgilla welcomed him, and heard the rude march of his music, he brought the battle surely near enough her home. The minstrel knew all there was to tell; his disguise was used by knight and king for purposes both of love and war, as told by the old

annalists, Saxon, Norman, Provençal and Dane. Perhaps Devorgilla made her own songs for the harp. She is called "a sybil" in the old Prior de Burgh's praiseful verse. There are records of a few minstrel ladies—a few, but only a few. Usually the poetry of women found shadier channels for its need; the Miriams and Sapphos were distanced from each other by crowds of quiet matrons and maids, who did but lull their little children with the songs the singers had made, or sing above their own distaffs in their turret chambers or their bowers. Perhaps Devorgilla was only of these, notwithstanding she is called "a sybil sage" by the Prior Hugh de Burgh of Lanecroft.

Her years by the Nith are unstoried, yet the future, shining back upon the past, should give them more than usual interest, were there any records of them left. The boyhood of John Baliol, the future vassal king, spent beside this wise, gentle mother among the shadows of the river—had it no richer *aftermath* than the histories have told? "As Mary contemplative, as Martha pious" an old chronicle describes the mother. Had the son, in that tragic future, which has left him a dishonoured name, no puissant virtue on which kindly eyes might turn, when he stood with a white wand in his hand and gave up his kingdom of Scotland and his liberty to Edward First? But Devorgilla was lying then at peace, in a grave in her New Abbey, with the heart of her husband resting on her own heart.

She was sixty years old when her husband John Baliol died. His remains were buried in a little church of which no stone is left, but his heart was embalmed and kept in a casket of iron and silver. Then began the long offering of Devorgilla's life. She raised the New Abbey on the meadow which the slow little Pow waters—within the vale of Nithsdale, yet not close to the stream of Nith, where perhaps life was repeated in a measure too full and fine. The river which love made sacred, she would not touch with death; yet would not have it afar, but where, after summer vespers, she still might weave soft, waning reveries before the sun had set. So we see the new cloister rise on the meadow land; we, watching from our distant watch-tower, six hundred years down time. We feel the soft gleam of sunshine on the first fall of snow round the Abbey, or see the fresh carving of the chisel fretted with its first frozen dew. We see the aged, far-looking eyes fade beneath the widow's veil; the tranquil folds of a gown, not kept in marble or bronze, softly bend the white daisies on the path to the new high altar. Devorgilla had lands in France, perhaps had travelled thither in her youth, and was touched by the devout culture of the court of St. Louis. We light round her brow the nimbus of age and pure love, and forget, as we linger in the cloister which she raised in memory of the dead, how much we are wrapping in our fancy this far-off lady of Nithsdale. But this is the way of fancy, which is wilful in its waste, and

gives and keeps love with its own discretions and perversities. Of faithfulness even over mute things, it is enamoured always. Old Nicolas Poussin, crossing the Campagna with his handkerchief full of moss and stones and flowers—those first simple loves and studies of his youth, to which his age endlessly returned, in some swift manner, seizes our sympathy and makes the old painter dear. A detached name is enough—a trait, an incident, a little epitaph, an Abbey rising in the meadows, to consecrate unalterable devotion. We keep in our hearts a silent gallery of the faces of ungreeted friends. Some word, spoken centuries ago, becomes a talisman of introduction; some versicle, the rudest on the lips, bespeaks a sudden welcome. The images which fill the largest space in history, are not those whom we make our friends, but those obscure figures, of whom the thing that has been told us, has made us aware of ourselves—the quickened pulse-beat has proclaimed our kin. If this is but a delicate egotism, perhaps so is all sympathy. Self-recognition in a beautiful and tender embodiment is continually the idyll most beloved. The Lady Devorgilla built her Sweetheart Abbey on the meadow, as others who have loved have built only a fane within their own hearts.

In 1275, six years after the death of Baliol, the Cistercian Monks, for whom it was built, filled the New Abbey. A bit of the beautiful chapter-house, some fragments of the fair aisles, the south transept

with the heart in its roof carved beneath two pastoral staves, still form the cluster of ruins round the parish church of New Abbey. Love, Death and Sorrow have walked beside the water many ages since the convent rose, and the sowers have sown in the furrows through the windy March noon, and the reapers have reaped the barley, and the bandsters have bound the sheaves, and their songs have floated down the waterside under centuries of September moons. But the sweet olden idyll is our own, kept so by perpetuity of love; the flowers that faded round the feet of Devorgilla were also our father's flowers. We are "stepping westward" softly with our feet in the old prints. The dearest face among our dearest, looks out through the shadows of the past. The young son or brother, whose brave, sweet, beautiful eyes flash out their scorn or their tenderness on the wrongs or wants of to-day, whose voice falls into music over the old border songs, has he not the eyes or voice of some early worker or singer, repeated with the revered persistency of far repeated kin. So the watersides are our own by a long right of way, and Devorgilla, the lady of Galloway, becomes no shadow among the shades. She was still waiting in her sweet serene age when the death of Alexander Third occurred, and the royal descent of Devorgilla turned the eyes of Scotland on her house. She died while her son John Baliol and her grand nephew Robert Bruce were yet disputing for the throne, one year before

her son was crowned king at Scone, five years before he was discrowned and made a prisoner in the tower of London. The school histories tell his fate, with the comment that in times of less trouble he would have been a good king, which we who have known Devorgilla beside the water of Nith, believe with glad faith. And resting in her New Abbey she did not know his sorrow, or knew it and watched it all, perhaps, from that veiled land where wrong alone is sorrow, where the captive, discrowned son, whose world had been all in her love, whose lessons of gentleness, discordant with his time, had been learned at her feet among the flowers, did not need that largest pity as many who struggled up to triumph and added crowns to coronets did. But the Idyll of the Nith is told. Is the song of the river the sweeter? They are gathering in the harvest. Ours is gathered now.

BY THE NETHAN.

"Gray friars have told their beads,
And peasant folk have sung their psalms and fought—
The stream flows on, its litany unchanged."

—J. H. H.



If you love a lonely waterside, here is an ideal place; here you may find solitudes. Without distraction of spirit, you may wander by their unfrequented ways; for the Nethan is a sonnet among waters—a little stream with only one thought. From its rise on the moors of Ayr to its rest at the Nethan foot, it bears only the burden of worship that has risen from its quiet places. From Forest Cairn to Stoneyhill is certainly not a beautiful stretch of lowland Scotland, lying high and bleak with the vestiges of an earlier forest deeply buried in the moss, and few inhabitants but the shepherd and the sheep and the rowan-tree. But it has the sweetest noteriety as the birth-place of many streams, and is not this fame enough for any green parish to desire? A dozen little wandering waters, each with a song of its own, to be sung far away

from the mother moor, sung under hazel and willow, sung over shingle and sand, sung through hamlets and sheepfolds, through places of toil and rest, making a few human souls the gladder as is the wont of such streams.

Among these this moorland sonnet, this little stream of one thought, comes soberly, softly through the peat moss, with the music of far off psalms. Do you know the colour of water that flows over peat—its richness of amber and amethyst, its warm, opaque darkness, its glimmer of coy light? Do you know its serene surface, its melodious monotone, and how its voice but emphasises stillness, without break of pebble and rock? Here, in the shadow of death, brave, simple-hearted men held their faith without symbol, and worshipped in the open starlight, and baptised in the moorland streams. The little children came with their wonder and their young dreams, and the poor aged women with their weary past, and only the home-light of heaven to brighten their tired brows; and the men, bronzed from the plough, in their strong youth; and the devout lairds with their counsels learned half from the low countries, and half from the Bibles which they carried with their swords. You who love your beautiful Liturgy—to whom its deep, simple prayers are laden with the cry of the ages; whose hearts have grown stronger in the battle and the sorrow because of the brotherhood kneeling with you, for whom the Easter morning sunshine is each year a

resurrection to the soul, for whom the songs of the birds are rising over the uplifted Cross; you cannot feel the throb of the peasant's heart to know why he suffered and fought—the brave and honest father of the brave and honest peasant of to-day.

Nothing is changed here. The lonely font is gleaming still the same among the long grasses. This is the brown peat-moss on which the people worshipped, and yonder the low knowes where they watched on the *weather-gleam*. Time stays his foot on such a barren soil. Who should dispute possession of the moorland with the sheep and the shepherd and the rowan-tree?

When the river has left the upland and flowed but a little way it enters that pretty valley which is the garden of Machute.

Perhaps you never heard of Machute. He was a Celtic saint, who lies far back in the calendar, one scarcely knows how far. But he loved fair flowers and shady trees, like many reverent souls who listen for the voice of the Lord God walking in the garden in the cool of the day. And he saw the sweetness of the land, which was watered by the stream of the moor. So here he built his cell, and tended his pleasant flowers, and cleared vistas in the forest, through which the little stream sang. The trout from the stream, and the deer from the forest, and the soft low hills folding round to temper the windy storm—Machute had chosen well, as those old saints were wont. Saint Machute, or Saint Mahago

he was called; and, when he had passed away, the land he had made the lovelier became in the British tongue *Lis* (or the garden of) *Mahago*.

The fair gardens lingered long on the banks of the *Nethan* water, when even the name of the saint was forgotten save by those who were curious in such lore. After many centuries King David the First granted those rare gardens and the little sacred cell to the Abbot and Monks of *Kelso*. They became a sort of inner sanctuary, a retreat in the deeper forest, to which at certain seasons the more devout might withdraw. The sweet and shady *Nethan* water, having wandered so far from the moor, wound through the Abbot's gardens with a voice of livelier song. It fretted over the pebbles, under the hazel trees; the bees hummed in great lime branches but a stone-cast from its own wet flowers; at its nearest point to the monastery it was stayed by a great boulder—the boulder threw a brown shadow in a deep and solemn pool. The anglers know it well; here they still cast their lines, as the monks did in Saint David's reign,—as the *Culdee* Saint *Machute* did in the summers whose histories are forgotten.

The monastery of *Lesmahagow* became more and more renowned. King David granted it the privileges of a refuge, to which all in danger might flee, except those guilty of one or two specified crimes. So this beautiful forest sanctuary lay like healing in the heart of the land. The bells of the hours, pure and sweet, rang like jubilees down the

oak-glades. Every new summer and winter deepened the psalms of the cloister. It became the more beloved by the monks of Kelso, as more fierce and frequent raids from the English borders put the mother Abbey in peril. Here, by the Nethan water, they were far from the strife of arms, and the years made the convent lovelier as its favour increased its needs.

Then it became an Abbey, with its own chapels and cells; and grew so stately and renowned, it could be a retreat no more. The English horsemen, on a summer day, rode up the Nethan water, and the monks of Kelso came no longer to find peace among its white lilies. The gardens of Saint Machute were filled with the soldier's revelry; the banner of an Earl of Cornwall floated over the moorland stream, the axe of English woodmen laid the beloved trees low. When they left the Nethan valley they left no convent behind, only a heap of ruins among the trampled flowers, and the mutilated oaks and elms. The Abbey was indeed restored, but never to its first beauty.

Now the village of Lesmahagow fills the place of the fair gardens, the place of the sun flowers and the lilies, and the noiseless grassy walks. The parish church marks the site of the old Augustinian choir, and the ruddy children laugh on their mothers' doorsteps, where the shadows of the gray arcades fell in forgotten afternoons. But the Nethan water sings for the village, as sweetly as it sang for the

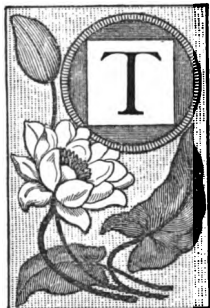
convent; it is still a clear shady water, restful in silence and song.

The Nethan never reaches the sea, but only the river Clyde—that is miles from the village—in a great shadow of trees. Near the place where the rivers meet rise the ruins of Craignethan Castle, best known to strangers as the Tillietudlem of “Old Mortality.” Of the four towers which guarded it two only now remain, their summits bright with grass and violets, and shady with ash and hazel, and the willow and the rowan-tree. On summer days the basket makers cut the willows on the castle walls. Far down below, shadow lies upon shadow, and in the deepest of the greenness the Nethan meets the Clyde. There, in a melodious sestet, it gathers all its music with a grace. Its last lines and its loveliest still vibrate with the worship of the moorlands. The castle has its own history, but none to overshadow the imaginings harmonising it with all the stream—the Solemn League and Covenant must be woven even into its romance. The water has been faithful to the end. Since the days of Fra Guittone no truer sonnet has been made—a sonnet among Scottish water in the softest of Lowland measures—a little stream with one thought.

THE NORTH ESK.

"Man is more than half of Nature's treasure,
Of that fair beauty which no eye can see."

—*Hartley Coleridge.*



O lie in the lap of a landscape that is storied foot by foot—that has no sweet secrets—no elder tree shadow unexplored, is the fate of the beautiful water that winds through the Hawthornden. Here the angler may haunt it no more, nor the lover of solitary places. The pureness of the winding water which sings from the woods to the sea, is but a traditionary pureness. There is only a little left to love. The shady trees indeed remain still, and the flowers.

But the water is turbid; it reflects what it can. A running water mirrors unfairly at the best. It is always a fickle thing; uncertain what it truly loves. A few songs have kept what the Esk could not hold unsung; what its unsweet ripples can reflect, however brokenly, no more. But the woods, the oaks, the beech trees—these keep their own; and the castle and the chapel of Roslyn uphold state in the sylvan places.

Opposite the woods of Roslyn stretch the woods of Hawthornden. Here greets you that sweet personality which the heart desires in all shady deeps; for which unconsciously it sought in the deeps of the hyacinth bed—among “the reeds and the lilies” which the poet meditated wearing for a crown. Drummond offers a welcome to King James, not a pæan to his own woods, when he indites the sonnet in the shadows beside his sweet Esk :

“And I myself, wrapt in a watchet gown,
Of reeds and lilies on my head a crown,
Shall incense to thee burn, green altars raise,
And yearly sing a pæan to thy praise.”

But the late reader transfers it with a willing delight to those shades where the doves moan secretly, where the flowers flush the hidden paths. Through the greenness one may hear the water—the pleasant voice of the Esk. For the charm lost for the eye is kept for the ear still, and always the voice of a river sounds like the voice of a friend. You experience possession in loveliness; you share a secret ownership in every fair rood of earth. You want no title-deeds; its beauty has made it yours to keep in your heart for ever with the love which you keep for your own.

So you are pleased and irrationally flattered by the poet-laird's love for Hawthornden. The “dear woods,” the “sweet solitary places” are epithets your heart approves. Even the grief of Drummond

affects you only with a certain pensive pleasure, or a gentle sympathy to which there is communicated no distress. Sweet, not passionate, you judge him preserving his loss in Petrarchan sonnets by this sweet shady Esk. You do not fear the breaking of the heart which thus crystalizes its tears. The grief which bursts into music by its own necessity, which must find outflow in either death or song, has a somewhat different cadence which you cannot expressly define.

Not that you doubt his love; but his sorrow has not passed into his song. You can detach his lines without responsive emotion;

“A hyacinth I wished me in her hand.”

And here are the blue wood hyacinths, whose breath coming up from the river side penetrates you with a tender sentiment to which the written poem makes no appeal. And then you understand that the flowers and the Esk were Drummond's true poems, the symbols where his love took refuge—symbols only translated in part. And you seek the transcript of his life not in lyric or sonnet—but in the river he loved which solaced him better than his lyre.

For the sweet ripple of the Esk had more music than his measured verse, a more intricate melodious beauty to express all the changes of the soul. The love he lost in youth pervaded the poet's life, refined his existence as triumph and completion do not refine it, as loss and desire do. So he left his life a tranquil

poem among his ancestral woods. A quiet essayist, a sweet sonneteer, he lived beside his own Esk, and had his pensive premonitions, and wrote his gentle letters, and was called "Sweet William" by his friends. The literati of Edinburgh were willing bearers from the literati of London. "The summer might as well come without flowers, as Sir William Alexander without letters," Drummond wrote from his flower loved home to one of his correspondents in the south.

But with letters there came to this gentle recluse beside the Esk, a much less welcome visitor than the letters or the flowers—a visitor who was to make Drummond more famous than all his poetry could have done.

Few indeed who linger in the high old house or look down the glen of the Esk, or stand beneath the sycamore tree where Drummond sat when his visitor appeared, have read his Cypress Grove or his Flowers of Zion or even many of his sonnets. But they know how Ben Jonson walked from London to converse with this friend of Drayton and Stirling; and how his speech and his ways disgusted the fastidious laird, who committed his strictures to his diary with more frankness than was fit. For—having no mother nor sister nor wife with whom in the long summer twilights he was free to wear this mental dishabille—he made his pen his confidant, and wrote for all the future to read his own dispraise with his guest's.

Biography, which is true biography, does not compose like a picture. It has its harmonious parts; and bits which are out of "keeping"; bits which we should omit from any ideal life, which no careful novelist would suffer in his work of art. Among such things, foreign to his genius, things which would not assort with his life, one must class Ben Jonson's visit to Drummond of Hawthornden. Admit the flaw to the uttermost, the life is beautiful enough still. One is fain to explain to one's self and others that the vice was a "virtue run to seed"; that a certain luxuriance of soil made the seeded virtue possible; an over-shot grace of hospitality, a tension of self-control. It is the one ungracious episode of a life wealthier in friendships than most, an episode which enriched the banks of the Esk with some distinctive memories.

Nowhere is the stream so lovely as beneath the house of Hawthornden. It was something to have an accompaniment so sweet to that loved Italian poetry; to write those long memorial poems in the shadows of a glen so deep and fair; to hear the the wind ring its Kyries and its Glorias through boughs that overhung the water, and have visits of the ghosts of Pictish kings from the caves beneath the roots of the beeches, while the mists from the German sea floated landward, and the winds brought the storm-birds on their wings.

And the poet with his dead love laid in the mists of the Fife shore, beguiled his sorrow with the music

of the river and his own lyre. A poet makes confessions continually; as a painter, a musician, does not. He betrays himself unaware, betrays himself sometimes most openly where he seeks to keep his secret most close. Always his page is toned by some colour from his own life. What but his own life can one human soul bring to another?

But Drummond out-lived his sorrow full thirty years, and married in late middle life, and rebuilt the house of Hawthornden.

“How oft doth life grow less by living long!
And what excelleth but what dieth young?”

But this was the thought of his sorrow, when the first lights of youth went out, and he shuddered at the desolating touch of death, while hope was yet unfulfilled, when he wrote in the deepest of the den his long memorial poems, and became the “Scottish Petrarch” in his sonnets of love and grief. The “dear idleness” of which he had written then was succeeded by years full of life and all that life brings. The lyrics and sonnets were mostly past, the dreams in the high old tower, and duties of family and state crowded into the late years.

But the sweet music of the Esk followed him to his grave, which was made in the old churchyard of Lasswade. The river is wandering near.

THE WHITE CART.

"But now the sharer of a common lot!"

—*Erasmus Henry Brodie.*



It is the sorrow of this water that where it is known best it has been bereaved of its beauty from almost forgotten days. It creeps through Paisley, with the dark unbeautiful houses coming down to its fated edge, yet without that air of distinction which supreme ugliness may give—or those saving touches which intimate a beautiful past, and make vistas into loveliness that lingers no more. Not even the needle of the etcher could evoke a charm from its stolid face. Where the monks from the near Abbey came to angle in the river, a new Town Hall has been gifted to obliterate all suggestions of the years; and the old pearl fishery on the farther bed of the stream has a fabulous sweetness in its name which provokes forlorn comparison.

The Black Cart, higher, nearer the heart of hills, is fair enough and quiet enough to lead the soul a summer quest. It has heard in its heart and echoed

low whispered sermonettes of flowers; it has come with a grace through the haunts of them, and come with a reminiscence of their sweets. It played its delicate overture through the shadows of Castle Semple to the genius of sweet St. Bridget in her lost chapel on the loch—the genius of the gentle Saint of Violets and all wild flowers. And the old island peel of the vassals of the first Stewart was of kith and kin to the river which wandered from the peel tower's lake. It has its beautiful story which it keeps wherever it flows, like an honour from a queen's hand worn beneath a tattered cloak.

But the White Cart rises on the moors—in no soft shadows of lakeland, and instead of chapel and saint has only a castle and a queen. Only a castle and a queen, and the sweetest plenitude of flowers which it hoards for its sister river till they flow together to the sea.

The castle at Cathcart above the stream keeps a shred of Queen Mary's story. The wild flowers have rooted in the old walls; the trees fill the desolate loopholes, and a waste of Sweet Cicely comes up to the castle gates. You may go through the daisies to the court knowe, and stand beneath Queen Mary's Thorn and watch where the Queen watched her last battle-field. And down beneath is the Cart flowing through the soft wavy fields, between beds of Our Lady's Mantle, and under the old ash trees. The birds build their nests in the branches, the butterflies

poise on the flowers, and the quiet old graves are warm and green with the dews and the sunshine of the centuries. This is the vale of the White Cart that flowed through the peat moss, through the oak forest, and the apple orchards past the Clugniac Abbey gate. Here it still keeps its beauty; the Abbey is of the past—wearily weighted with the years lingering on in a gray old splendour—a place of dreams and graves. And the river, through the old regality, forgetting the greenness and the flowers, the old broom dykes and the quarries and the pearls and the lilies and the oaks, flows itself an unlovely thing through the dreary dark. It only resumes its beauty when it passes nearly to the sea.

At Inchinnan, to atone for lost loveliness, three rivers meet beneath the shadows, in the tenderest silence to be found round the old Knight Templars' graves. An ivy-hidden church is here, and yew and chestnut and ash, and silver willow leaves that whiten in the quiet place. And the soldier-monks rest in their tombs in the grass with moss crept through their graven swords; Gryfe and Black Cart and White Cart singing requiems for them in the lovely gracious twilight of the leaves.

The river is lovely at last—rippling round the ancient graves—a place of shadows, a haunt of silence and of flowers. Here in the shiver of the willows is a shrine for dreams and thoughts; a covert

to search for violets, and whence to look through the wind-harps and perhaps see the blue of heaven. And some future, fairer than the past, may come to the little river which girds itself anew for story though its pearls were all gathered long ago.



THE END.

